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St. Louis
1829

W E R T E R

A N D

C H A R L O T T E,

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G E R M A N S T O R Y.



W E R T E R

A N D

C H A R L O T T E,

A

Goethe

G E R M A N S T O R Y.

Of those who in the Earth so cold,
No more the smiling Sun shall view;
Should many a tender Tale be told,
For many a tender Thought is due.

MISS MOORE.

A N E W T R A N S L A T I O N,

From the last LEIPSIK EDITION. Illustrated with
NOTES.

L O N D O N:

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W. E. G. T. S.

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1853

P R E F A C E.

THAT an Original loses by Translation, is obvious to every one who reads two languages: and, that this should be the particular case with the present Work, is not wonderful, when we find the Translator own himself ignorant of the original language it was written in. It is, we find, to a French copy we are indebted for the version which has been so long and so justly admired*. The German has never been consulted before the present; therefore, many particulars have been omitted, according to the caprice of the two Translators, which will be found to throw a light upon this most affecting story. Beside leaving out whole letters, the ODE, written by WERTER, and some verses which occur in other places, have been totally forgotten; perhaps, from a want of a poetical imagination, to transfuse the untangible idea, inspired by the phrensy of poetical enthusiasm.

* Vide Page vi of the Preface to the former edition in two vols.

Mr. GOETHE, the Author of this Work, has given us little more than the particulars of a fact, which actually happened a few years since; and, as he informs us, within the circle of his own observation. It was read with applause in Germany and France; and, in a short space, was many times printed. The uncommon simplicity of the story, occasions it essentially to differ from a common novel, which alway contains more characters, more events, and raises the expectation of the reader in proportion as the catastrophe approaches his eye. On the contrary, here is but one correspondant: it is Werter alone. You see him in that distracted situation of mind, so common to our countrymen, that we are proverbially the jest and pity of foreign nations.

Many have supposed, and some have asserted, that Mr. GOETHE was an apologist for suicide; and that his work was an attempt to vindicate what is, in itself, indefensible: but these did not distinguish the writer from his book, absurdly ascribing to him, the errors and follies of his hero. By parity of argument, we might with equal propriety arraign dramatic and epic writers, for the foibles they represent in the characters they exhibit: a mode of reasoning, as weak as it is fallacious.

Bossv,

BOSSU, a celebrated French critic, in enumerating the several requisites necessary for the formation of a hero, omits every qualification but those which constitute a handsome intelligent being. Achilles, according to Homer, is wrathful. The Devil is reputed the hero of MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*; and Count Fathom is a being which most honest folks would wish to shun. But is Homer, Milton, or Smollet, to be indicted for the crimes perpetrated by the heroes of their own creation, or contrivance?

From the foregoing observation, it is not to be wondered at, if we sometimes meet with irregular ideas, and sentiments of religion, tinged with extravagance. Religion had made a deep impression in the bosom of WERTER; but perfection is not the lot of humanity. Nature had infused too strong a proportion of passion in his compassion: his feelings, like those of our CHATTERTON, were too fine to support the load of accumulated distress; and like him, his diapason closed in death. Reader! take not offence at his expressions, but return thanks to heaven for having placed in thee a mind less susceptible of frailty, and more passive to the behest, and intent of thy Creator.

 WERTER and CHARLOTTE.

 LETTER I.

I AM not sorry that I went away. But how could I withdraw from my companion, from my friend, from one whose very form I adore? Surely the human heart is inexplicable: it seeks ease where it is least likely to find it. But you will forgive me; I know you will. What an infatuated being I am! I have formed some connections, and these are the very source of my present unhappiness. Poor Eleonora! Yet who shall blame me for the tenderness which took possession of her gentle heart, whilst I was gazing on the superlative charms of her dear sister? Certainly, No! I am surely innocent: but am I entirely so? Might I not fan the flame of affection; and have you not seen me pleased, amused, and soothed, with the most trifling expression of her kindness? I am very ingenious in tormenting myself; and I find many causes of reproach: but I promise you, my

dear friend, to desist. I will not be always looking on the retrospect of the painful sufferings I have endured. The present moment I will enjoy, and forget the past. Nothing is more just than your observation. There certainly exists, in the human frame, a strong propensity to recal the past scenes of sorrow and distress we have suffered; and this, while it casts a gloom over the mind, adds greatly to the number of the wretched.

Pray be so obliging as to inform my mother, that I am busied about her concerns, and that I shall soon inform her how I have sped on her account. I have been on a visit to my aunt, and find the good lady has been misrepresented to me: instead of finding her peevish and petulant, I was agreeably deceived, and surprised in finding her the most chearful, agreeable woman you ever beheld, and her heart surpasses her temper, for it is the best in the world. I related to her in what manner my mother had been wronged, with respect to that portion of her fortune, which has been unjustly withheld. She laid before me the reasons for her conduct, and the motives which actuated her proceedings, and she appears very willing to resign up the whole, and to comply to all we desire: She even promises to do more than we have asked: I will not occupy your time with the subject at present, but only assure my mother, from me, that every thing relating to her affairs shall be carried on with the utmost justice and propriety, and I doubt not but all will end to her satisfaction at last. On this occasion I experience, as on many others,

* This first object of his attention is supposed to be dead, and has nothing to do with the subsequent part of the story. TRANSLATOR.

that

that neglect and misunderstanding create more confusion and uneasiness, than dishonesty and malevolence; and in all human transactions, they are also much more frequent.

Nothing can be more charming to me than my situation here. Solitude has always been courted by the great and wise, and in this terrestrial paradise it is a medicine to my mind. In this soft season of the year, when the sun, like a dusty bridegroom returns to the embraces of his bride, all nature rejoices, and every field looks gay. The zephyrs waft a balm which rejoices the heart of man, and revigorates his soul. The blith tenants of the woods renew their matin songs, and in the evening Philomel sings a requiem to departing day. What a contrast between the city and the country! and yet the greatest natural beauties surround it. The town itself affords me no pleasure, but the prospects which its neighbourhood displays, are of the finest kind. Upon one of those hills, which is a link of that chain wisely planned by nature to diversify our landscape, the late Marquis of Mabley has made a garden. It is so much in the true natural simplicity of horticulture, that it is difficult at first sight to perceive it was not laid out by a gardener, but by the fine taste of a man of genius for his own enjoyment. I have already bestowed some tears to the memory of its departed possessor, in an arbour which is at present almost in ruins. This was its master's favorite retreat, where he secluded himself from the bustle of life, and the heat of the regent of day. At present, I claim this spot; and I hope before long to have entire possession of the garden: the gardener is already in my interest, and I will take care he loses nothing by it.

LETTER II.

May 10.

HOW shall I express the mental satisfaction which solitude affords? My mind is as calm and serene, as was our first parents in the garden of Eden. The fine mornings of Spring rejoice the eye and the heart. Solitude and tranquillity, in a country so well suited to my disposition of mind, give me a taste of life superior to all the fastidious enjoyments of it. Rural felicity is happiness indeed! and the pleasure of mere existence have taken such possession of all my faculties, that I neglect my talents, and forget my wonted amusements. My pencil and palet lie useless, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. The morning mist, exhaled by the powerful heat of the sun, leaves the leaves bespangled with gems of the purest water.—Thick tufted trees, interweaving over my head, form a Gothic arch, which defends me from the orient sun; and here and there a few rays of light darted through, checkers the shade with light. Here, pensive I melancholy stray. Sometimes prostrate on the long grass, or reclined near the margin of a meandering stream, I admire the variety of vegetative creation, and grow familiar with all the myriads of insects and reptiles that surround me. In beholding these, I feel the divine breath of that all-powerful omnipotent Being, at whose mighty fiat this universal frame came into existence. His bounty I behold in the provision he has made for his creatures as they hum amongst the flowers, creep in the grass, or roll in the flood. His eternal love supports, comforts,
and

and amazes us. A dimness gathers round my sight; the heavens and the earth, the system of the universe, the infinite extension of space, dwell on my mind, and absorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved mistress. Oh that I had but powers to express these vast conceptions, that I could describe the works of the divine architect with the same warmth and energy, that they are impressed on my soul! Overwhelmed with the sublimity of the mighty whole, I am lost in astonishment, and overpowered with gratitude.

LETTER III.

May 12.

GUARDIAN ANGELS hover over my steps, or the most lively genius influences my senses, and pours the incense of gladness in my heart. The beauties of Paradise are open before me. By the fascination of enchantment I am attached, like Medusa and her sisters, to a spring of pure water, which rises from the rock, in a hollow at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rustic steps cut in the earth lead to it; the towering pines which overshadow it, the cool refreshing air which rises from the stream, the murmur of the water which aptly reminds me of the slow but certain lapse of time, and the artless notes of the sweet inhabitants of the boughs, make the place the most agreeable one I ever spent an hour in in my life. I never fail to visit it every day, and generally pass an hour or two there. The young girls from the town resort there for wa-

ter—

ter—they sit down, and they chat away half an hour. Here I behold in this innocent and necessary employment the first occupation of mankind. The remotest times present themselves to my imagination—I see the daughters of kings and great men making contracts of marriage, and our ancestors concluding treaties and making alliances by the side of fountains, propitious spirits bearing witness, and pilgrims weary with the sultry heat of day seated on the margin, and laving their limbs in the translucent stream, then pouring out the gratulatory song to the author of nature. My dear friend, those who cannot enter into these sensations, have never really enjoyed the refreshing balm of repose by the side of a spring, after a long walk in a sultry day.

LETTER IV.

May 15.

I Sincerely thank you for your offer; but I will have nothing to do with books: keep them, for heaven's sake, and do not, I pray, send me any: I have been so long guided already, that I wish to remain free. Books agitate the mind, and nature has infused so strong a passion there, that I only want strains that may lull me; and Homer sufficiently furnishes me with these. Often have I strove to calm the raging fever that seemed boiling in my veins;—often have I endeavoured to stem the torrent of passion that threatened to overset my whole frame—But it is not to you that I need explain the nature of
of

of my sensations; you know the keen susceptibility of my feelings. You have often seen with concern my sudden transitions from sorrow to intoxicating joy, and from dark melancholy to violent and dangerous passions. My poor heart is as wayward as a sick child; and, like one, I let it have its way:— But why should I dwell upon this explanation to you, to whom I have owned a hundred times that I deserve to be blamed for letting my passions gain such an ascendancy over my reason.

LETTER V.

May 15.

I AM already grown the favorite of the common people here, and particularly the children. When I first took notice of them, and interrogated them, they answered me rudely with contempt, and I fancy thought I meant to insult them. I, however, persisted in my endeavors to be agreeable, and I soon found the truth of an observation I had often made before, that people of a certain condition keep their inferiors at too much distance, as if their consequence could be lessened by their approach. It is a poor pitiful instance of wantonness, or want of wit, which could induce any person to treat their inferiors with contempt after having made themselves familiar. You know that in the present connection of things, we are not, nor cannot be all equal; therefore, whoever imagines to acquire respect from the people by keeping them at a distance, I look upon as a coward,
who

who secludes himself, lest he should be unable to look his adversary in the face. The last time I visited the fountain, I met a young woman on the steps, with her pail beside her, waiting the assistance of some one to place it on her head. "My dear, shall I help you up," said I. "I thank you, Sir," she answered, colouring. "Make no compliments;" so saying, I lifted the pail upon her head; she thanked me, and smiling went her way.

LETTER VI.

May 17.

I Cannot tell what it is the people see in me that can so much attract their notice; but they seek after me with as much ardour as if I was a being belonging to some other planet. I am sorry that I cannot proceed any farther with them. I have made a world of acquaintance in this place; but as yet formed no society. You wish to be informed what sort of people they are here? why just the same, my dear friend, as are to be met with every where else. Nature has formed us all alike, but fortune has made some difference. The greatest number are obliged to labor the whole length of their lives, merely to acquire a scanty subsistence; and the small portion of time that remains on their hands is so heavy and irksome, that they are contriving every method their imagination can devise to get rid of it. *O Tempora! O Mores!* And such is the allotted fate of man!

However,

However, my dear, there is a species of people, whose character is admirable: with these amiable souls I would often wish to forget myself, and enjoy a portion of that pleasure which society alone can afford. A chearful repast, a social company where frankness and openness of heart excites hilarity, a promenade, a dance, and other such amusements in their company, have the most wonderful effect on my disposition: yet such is the enigmatical constitution of man, that I cannot forget those other qualities which in me lie latent, useless; and which I am even obliged carefully to conceal from their view. Alas! my dear friend, this idea sinks my spirits, and still it is the lot of all intelligible beings, like myself, not to be comprehended.

Ah! why have I no longer the friend of my early days? or why did I ever know her? I might answer myself, "WERTER, it is a vain pursuit; thou art seeking after that which thou shall never find!" But I had found the precious gem: I had found an exalted mind, which raised me above myself, and made me all that I could wish to be, or was capable of being. The powers of my soul were expanded, and like a flower opening to the sun, the generous sentiments which nature had engraved on my heart were unfolded. What an intercourse of pleasurable sensations! Our thoughts, our words, our most secret wishes, were those of pure nature; and the warmest affections glowed in our hearts; and now—but Heaven retains her sweet spirit; she is gone before me in the career, and has left me alone in the world. Her memory dwells in my mind, and will be ever dear to my heart. Oh! I shall never forget the strength of her mental powers, and the sweetness of her temper.

Some

Some time since I met with Mr. V. an accomplished young man, with a very agreeable countenance. He is lately arrived from the university of Upsal; and such is his modesty, he is not in the least conceited, though he may, perhaps, see his superiority to many that he converses with. Indeed he has applied with assiduity to his studies, and has got much knowledge. Understanding that I read Greek, and could draw, (two very extraordinary things in this part of the world) he came on purpose to see me, and displayed his whole stock of literature, from Homer to Winkelman, and from De Piles to Priestley. He affirmed he had read all the first part of Sultzzer's Theory, and was in possession of a MS. of De Heyne's, on the study of the antique. I cannot help smiling while I write this: however, I forgave him.

I have also been acquainted with a very worthy man, who is the Prince's steward. He is one of the best-natured men I ever met with; free and open in his manner, and loves society. I am informed there is nothing more pleasant than to behold him surrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldest daughter is much talked of and admired as a beauty. I have the honor to be invited to his house, and intend going the first opportunity. It is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting-lodge, which the Prince, his master, permits him to inhabit, since the loss of his wife. The poor man loved her so much, he could not bear to continue in the steward's house, when she died. I have so much yet to say, that I verily believe I never shall have done. You must know then I have fallen in with some ridiculous people; or rather, they have thrown themselves in my way. Their manners are so insupportable, that I cannot bear their professions of friendship.

ship. Adieu, my friend. I hope this epistle will please you, as the subject is historical.

LETTER VII.

May 22.

LOVE. By what other name shall I call those returns of sympathy still more endearing, which all experience that are under its dominion. It enkindles warm desires in the heart; and these very desires render the heart susceptible of higher degrees of felicity. They are the parents of pleasing illusions, which raise weak and feeble mortals to the divine nature.—From hence arise looks full of tenderness and love; attachments the most sincere and disinterested; mutual intercourses which sweeten the path of life; and hopes arise which are its chief support and sovereign balm. It is I know the parent of cares also; but it renders even these pleasing and delightful, by the tender concern it inspires for the happiness of those who are the objects of them; and where it exposes to troubles, it makes them supportable by the advantages that result from them. Can any thing be more delightful than the connection of two hearts? From hence those bonds uniting individuals together, so as to render them as one; from this union the reciprocal intercourse of assistance, consolation, offices of friendship on one side, and, on the other, gratitude, esteem, and love. From the benignant influence of this law flows our principal happiness; and man forgets his pains, his weakness; in this association he loses
fight

sight of the miseries concomitant with his state, and compares his felicity with that of angels *.

Yet life is but a dream, my dear friend. When I contemplate the narrow limits which confine the penetrating active powers of man; when I consider that his principal powers are wasted to supply the mere necessities of his nature, the ultimate of which is to prolong a miserable existence; that all his enquiries end in the discovery of the narrow limits of his understanding; and that he only amuses himself with painting brilliant figures and smiling views on the walls of his place of confinement. My dear, when I behold the small share he occupies in the scale of creation; when I see the boundary which confines his active powers—I say when I consider these things, I am silent: If I sink into myself, what do I find there? Alas! more uncertain wishes, desires, and visionary schemes, than conviction, truth, and reality: then all his chaos, and whirled round the wheels of confusion, the objects create a mist—I dream like others, and permit the stream to carry me away.

It has ever been the opinion of the most learned in metaphysics, that children are ignorant of the cause that excites their will. But that full grown children, as well as their offspring, should wander upon this earth, without knowing their original or destination; without any certain motive for their conduct, but guided like them with toys suited to their years; is what no one is willing to acknowledge; and yet is what nobody dares deny, however unwilling they may be to own it.

* The former translator has not thought fit to favor the English reader with this part of Werter's letter.

I can easily foresee what you have to offer in answer to my advance. I will allow that the happiest amongst us are those, who, like children, heed not the morrow, amuse themselves with toys, watch with impatience before the cupboard where mama keeps her sweetmeats; and when they get any, eat them rapidly, and cry for more. These are halcyon days, and he is a happy being who can thus be content with trifles. Many also are to be envied who can find the art of happily deceiving themselves, by dignifying their consequential employments, or their paltry pastimes with pompous titles; and who, ostentatiously exhibit to mankind a display of superior parts as beings of another order, whose occupation it is to promote their welfare and happiness. But the man who, conscious of his weakness, in all humility subscribes to the vanity of all these things, sees with what pleasure the wealthy merchant increases the enormous bulk of his fortune. He observes the overgrown citizen retire from the bustle of the town, and transform his little garden into an imaginary paradise; with what impatience the poor man bears his burden; and that all alike with equal ardour wish to behold the sun a little longer. He also may remain at peace; imagination will make him independent in a world of his own, and will rejoice because he is a man: but however circumscribed his action, he preserves in his bosom the idea of liberty, that sweet remembrance fills him with glee, and intimates that it is in his power whenever he likes to quit his prison*.

* Yet life is a loan from Heaven, and like the talent in the gospel should not be returned without improvement: if we are in a state of probation, it is highly criminal to fly in the face of him who sent us. TRANSLATOR.

LETTER VIII.

May 26.

MY dear, you know my taste in laying out a little favorite spot; how I choose my situation, make my arrangements, and settle myself in the enjoyment of it. And here I have found one quite agreeable to my wishes. It is very delightfully situated on the side of a hill, in a district called Walheim, about a league distant from town. There is a path leading from the village, at the top of which, you may view the whole country round; and there is an extraordinary character of an old woman who keeps a coffee-room there: but above all this, are two lime trees growing before the church, which overshadow with their ramifications a little green, the delightful scene of many rural habitations. You cannot easily meet with a more sequestered and peaceable retreat. I often retire thither from the old woman's, and read Homer and drink coffee. It happened accidentally, as I was rambling one fine afternoon, I discovered this place. The landscape was perfectly beautiful; every person was in the fields, except a child about four years old, who was diverting himself with some flowers on the ground. He held between his knees an infant of about six months, and now and then pressed it to his bosom with expressions of love; and notwithstanding the vivacity which sparkled in his large black eyes, he was quite passive, and delighted with the caresses. I sat myself down on a plough opposite, and was much pleased in drawing this affecting picture of brotherly affection. In order to complete the

the piece, I added some part of the surrounding hedge, the barn-door, and some of the implements of husbandry, without any order, but just as they happened to lie before me. In about an hour I found I had made a drawing of great natural expression, and very accurate design, without any assistance from invention, or inserting any thing of my own. This confirmed me in the resolution I had formed before, only to copy nature for the future. Indeed nature is boundless and inexhaustible, and will always furnish fresh materials for the pencil and pen of the painter and poet; and those who study her with assiduity, have never failed of becoming the greatest masters *.

All that is offered in favor of rules, is similar to what is said in favor of the laws of society. An artist formed upon them, will never produce any thing absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man, who obeys the laws, and observes due decorum, can never be a determined villain, or a malevolent neighbour. And after all that may be advanced in defence of rules, they still alter the true features and genuine expression of nature. Critics may assert, that they only take off superfluous branches, and prevent deformities †. Let us, my dear friend, compare talents to love. Let us, for a turn, suppose a man sincerely attached to a young woman, dedicating to her every hour of his time, paying her every attention possible, exercising his talents, and

* Werter observed this maxim with profit, as his letters sufficiently evince. He was a pastoral poet, of no mean genius; and some of his drawings, which are still extant, shew him to have copied nature with accuracy. TRANSLATOR.

† Dubos, a French critic, has said the same before.

exhausting his fortune, to convince her that he is entirely devoted to her person. Next, behold another of a cold, correct understanding; one, who perhaps is an acting public personage; and this very respectable man says to him, "My young friend, love is a natural passion, but it should be kept within artificial bounds: make a judicious division of your time, spend some with your mistress, reserve the rest for business; calculate your revenue, and out of the superfluity of your income make her presents; but let that be but seldom, only from time to time, on her birth-day or so." If the young man takes this advice, he may be a very useful member of society, and extremely serviceable to his superiors and his king; but, what becomes of his love? the flame is extinguished; and if he is a painter, or a poet, his genius is annihilated*. Oh! my dear friend, the torrent of genius would not be so confined in its course; it would rise superior to opposition, and, soaring to the sublimest heights, would astonish mankind. But stern neglect, enthroned in the bosoms of cold and narrow-minded men, frowns rigid, and blights the tender blossoms. These contracted souls are in possession of both the shores; they tremble for their paltry erections on its sides, and all their attention is turned to the security of their habitations: they intrench, and they raise dams to secure them from the danger which threatens their ruin.

* Such was the *salutary* advice given by a certain virtuoso to the great but unfortunate Chatterton.

LETTER IX.

May 27.

IN the violence of my enthusiasm I forgot to finish my narrative. Enveloped in my ideas of painting, which I unfolded to you at length in my last letter, I sat near two hours upon the plough, and towards evening a young woman with a basket on her arm came running to the children, who were yet in the same place. "There's a very good child, Philip," she said. I then advanced towards her, and enquired if she was the mother of those pretty children. She answered, yes, she was; she then gave the eldest a cake, and, snatching the little one up in her arms, kissed it with the tenderness and ardour of a mother. "I left them together," said she, "while I went to the town with their brother to buy some wheaten bread, some sugar, and an earthen pot to boil a few broth for Jenny to-night: the boys, you must know, broke our pipkin yesterday, as they were quarrelling for the meat." I then asked her where her other boy was; and whilst she was telling me that he was getting home two geese, he came running up to us, and gave Philip an ozier twig. I continued talking with the mother, and she kept playing with the youngest child, whose eyes glistened with joy at her return. I discovered, in the course of our conversation, that she was the daughter of the school-master of the village, and that her husband was gone to Holland upon the death of an uncle he had there. "My husband feared he should be cheated of the inheritance," she said; "for he wrote several letters, and received no answer to any,"
"and

and so he went himself. I have not heard any tidings of him since he sat out. Heavens protect him for my babes, and grant that no ill may have happened to him." I left this good woman with some regret, but not before I had given her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny, when she went next up to town, and one to each of the boys, and so we parted. In fact, my dear friend, nothing is better calculated to appease the disorder of the senses, than the sight of such a happy being. She moves with a negligent thoughtlessness in the confined circle of her existence: the past, and the future give her no uneasiness; the present alone occupies her thoughts: day after day passes without disquietude; and the autumnal season only reminds her of the approach of winter.

Since this time I have often visited the same place; I am familiar with the children; I give them a bit of sugar when I drink my coffee, and at night they partake of my bread and butter and whey. On Sunday I regularly give them a creutzar; and if I am not there after evening service, the old woman for me makes the usual distribution. We are grown so free together, that they tell me all they hear, and their innocent simplicity pleases me much. Their mother used for ever to be calling out to them, not to be troublesome to the gentleman, but I have at length prevailed upon the good woman to let them do as they like.

LETTER X.

June 16

WHAT a question you ask ! why I do not write to you oftener ? Do you pretend to penetration, and make such a silly enquiry ? You might have guessed that I was well, but that—in short, that I had found a person was still nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found. To give you a regular account how I learnt to distinguish the most amiable woman, would be a difficult matter. I am contented, therefore happy ; and consequently a bad historian. To say she is divine ; to call her an angel, you will tell me, is what every lover says of the woman he loves : and yet I cannot describe to you her perfections, nor why she is so handsome, nor how she has captivated all my senses. Such sweet simplicity, with so elevated an understanding, mild, yet animated ; placid and serene in the activity of youth. But these are only the common-place phrases of abstract ideas, and express not a single feature of her character. At some future opportunity—but it must be now or never,—for between ourselves, I have, since I began this epistle, been several times going to throw down my pen and fly to her. I made a solemn promise not to visit her this morning ; and I fly every minute to the window to see if the sun is still high.—I thought I could not long—I was not able to hold out. I went there ; I am now returned ; and whilst I am eating my bread and butter, write to you my dear friend. Nothing can be more affecting than to behold her surrounded by her little family, and in the midst of her economy.

mony. But if I continue in this manner, you will not be any wiser at the end of my letter than you were at the beginning. Your attention then : for I shall endeavor to give my narrative some order, and enter into a great many details in my relation.

You may remember, that some time ago I informed you how I had made an acquaintance with a Mr. J. F. of the prince's household ; and that he had kindly ~~invited~~ ^{written} me to go and see him in his rural villa, or rather in his little kingdom. †

According to my usual procrastination, I neglected going, and perhaps should never have gone, if chance had not discovered to me the latent treasure which it contained. It happened some of our young men proposed a dance, and in the country. Heartily joining in this, I chose a good likely girl for my partner, and rather agreeable too, but nothing showy. We agreed to take coach, and with my partner and her aunt, to call upon Charlotte, and take her with us to the ball. During the conversation which passed in the vehicle as it moved along, the young lady informed me we were to be in company with a very great beauty. " There you will find a most charming girl," said she, as we turned into the avenue which led to the hunting lodge ; " and pray take care, Sir, you do not fall in love with her," added the old lady, her aunt. " Why ?" said I. " Because, indeed," she replied, " she is already engaged to a very worthy man, who is now absent on his affairs upon the death of his father, and soliciting a very lucrative employment." This intelligence was a matter of great indifference to me, who hitherto had beheld the sex but with disdain since the death of my Eleonora. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was sunk near the tops of the hills,

hills, the atmosphere was lowering, and a storm seemed gathering in the horizon. The scene grew darker, the ladies began to be apprehensive, and every appearance threatened a storm. I foresaw myself a great probability of our journey being interrupted; but in order to cheer them up a little, I put on a very significant look, and, with great seeming weatherwise sagacity, pronounced the weather would be fine. I stepped out of the coach. A woman came and met us, and desired us to wait one minute for her mistress. I went up stairs, and as I entered the room I saw six fine children, the eldest of which was just eleven years of age, all anxiously busy about a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white silk gown, with pink ribbons. She was cutting slices of bread and butter from a brown loaf, and distributing it in a graceful and affectionate way to the children round her, according to their age and appetite. Each was clamorous, nor ceased holding up its little hands all the while the slice was cutting; then making a dutiful bow, thanked Charlotte when he received it, and away ran to the door to see the company, and gaze at the coach which was come to fetch her: "I hope you'll excuse me," said she, "for giving you so much trouble; indeed I am sorry to detain the ladies; but dressing, and some unavoidable family business, made me forget to give my children their usual little meal, and they are not used to receive it from any other hands." I said something, but I don't know what—I was entranced, captivated; my whole soul was in admiration at her air, her voice, her deportment; and before I could recollect myself, she ran into her apartment for her gloves and fan. Whilst she was absent, the little ones looked at me sideways, and whispered to each other.

other. I called to the youngest, who has a most pleasing countenance, and asked some little questions: he held his head askance, and drew back; Charlotte just then coming in, said, "Lewis, shake hands with your cousin." The child very obediently held out his hand, and I gave him a kiss. "My cousin!" observed I to the amiable Charlotte, as I handed her out, "do you think I am worthy of being esteemed a relation of your's?" "Oh! Sir," she archly replied, "I have so many cousins, I should be sorry you were the most undeserving of them all." When Charlotte took leave of them, she desired Sophy, who was then the eldest left at home, to take great care of the children, and to mind and go to her papa when he returned from his evening tour. She also admonished the little ones to mind their sister Sophy as much as if it was herself. They all promised obedience; but a little fair girl, of six years old, looked rather discontented, and sighing said, "Ah! but she an't Charlotte though for all that, and you know we love you best." The poor child was ready to burst into tears; Charlotte kissed her, and, giving her a cake from her pocket, bade her be a good girl till her return. While this time, the two eldest boys had climbed up behind the coach, and at my intercession they obtained leave of their sister to ride to the end of the wood, upon condition that they would sit very quiet, and promise to hold fast. We had but just seated ourselves in the carriage, talked about the weather, the new fashions, and the company we were to meet at the ball, when Charlotte stopped the coach, and bade her brothers get down. Here another scene of tenderness ensued; they would kiss her again before they left her: the eldest shewed all the tender at-
tention

tention of a lad of fifteen, and the youngest a great deal of ardour and affection. She desired them once more to remember her love to the children; and we drove on our way. "These children," said she, "are so fond of me, that I cannot stir out for them." "Indeed you are more than their sister, you are also a mother to them," replied the old lady; "but have you read the last book I sent you?" "I cannot say I have," answered Charlotte, "and I will return it back to you. I must confess it has not pleased me better than the first you sent me." I was a good deal surprized, when having asked her the title, she informed me it was the *Castle of Otranto*. Penetration and sound judgement appeared in every thing she said: her observations were the result of reflection: each expression seemed to enliven her features with new charms, and brighter rays of genius were unfolded by degrees as she found herself understood.

"When I was very young," she went on, "I loved romances better than any other books I could get at. Nothing in the world could have been a greater feast for me on a holiday, than to retire into a corner, and read some affecting story or other of a romantic cast, or which had a slight tincture of the spirit of knight-errantry. By degrees I began to lose the relish for these improbable relations, and novels of a more interesting character delighted me in my leisure hours. I then entered with my whole heart and soul into all the joy or sorrow of a *Miss Jenny*. *Grandison* and *Miss Harlow* have still some charms for me; but as I do not read much, the books I do read should be suited to my taste. I prefer the authors whose domestic scenes carry me not too far from my own situation in life; but where

I may imagine myself, and those who are around me, active in the drama, and whose stories are interesting and sympathetic, like the life I lead in the bosom of my family; which, without being a real paradise, is a continual source of satisfaction and delight." The close of her observation occasioned a greater emotion than I could well conceal, though it did not last long; for after she had given her opinion of a few more novels, amongst the number of which she particularly noticed the Vicar of Wakefield, with equal discernment and propriety, I could withhold no longer; and begun with much eagerness to inform her what were my own ideas on these subjects. After much more chat, when Charlotte at last addressed herself to the two other ladies, I just perceived that they were still in the coach. Her conversation had so far engrossed my whole soul, that I forgot we were going to a ball. The old lady looked at me several times with an air of raillery, as if she was not quite pleased with my engrossing Charlotte's conversation. However, I did not at all mind her humour, and we went on heedless of her disapprobation.

We next talked of dancing. "If it is a fault to love dancing," she said, "I must freely own that I am exceeding guilty; no diversion is more agreeable to my taste. If I meet with any disappointment, or if any thing disturbs me, I fly to my spinnet, play some lively tune I remember to have danced to, and all is forgotten." Only figure to yourself, my friend, my countenance whilst she was speaking. My soul was entirely absorbed, and seized her ideas so strongly, that I scarce heard the articulations which expressed them. My optics were fixed stedfastly upon her fine black eyes, which aptly expressed the serenity of her temper. At last the coach stopped; I descended

descended like one that dreams, and I found myself in the assembly-room, without knowing how I came there. The assembly was numerous. They began with minuets. I took round one lady after another, and exactly those who were the most disagreeable did not know how or when to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an English country dance. You cannot conceive my delight when they came to perform the figure with us. Charlotte seemed to dance with all her heart and soul, and as if she had never done ought else in her life; her figure is so elegant, light, and graceful. I went up to her, and begged the favor of dancing the second country dance with her; she politely informed me she was engaged for that turn, but engaged herself to me for the third; telling me at the same time, with the most engaging affability, that *alamandes* were her favourites. "It is the usual way here," said she, "for every couple to dance *alamandes* together; but my partner will be charmed if I save him the trouble, for he does the walse very ill, and I have observed the lady you danced with last is in the same predicament. I am sure by what I have had the pleasure of seeing of your English country dances, that you must dance the walse very perfectly yourself; so that if it is agreeable to you to dance the *alamandes* with me, go and propose it to my partner, and I will communicate the same intention to your's." This affair was quickly settled; and we agreed that, during the *alamandes*, Charlotte's partner should attend upon mine. When we first began, we only amused ourselves with making a few turns with our arms. Heavens! how graceful and animated are all her motions! Now the walse commenced, all the couples which were turning round at first jostled

each other. We very judiciously kept at a distance till the awkward and clumsy had withdrawn; and when we joined in, there were but two couples remaining.

I was now in imagination more than mortal. To embrace the most beautiful of her sex, to swim with the lovely fair one round the room, and lose sight of every other object, to be the envy and admiration of all the company!—It was now I formed the determination, that the woman I loved, and with whom I was then engaged, should never do the waltz with any one else.—You, I know, understand me. After making a few turns round the room to recover our breath, Charlotte sat down, and I presented her a few slices of lemon, all indeed I could find, which I stole from those who were making the liquor. This refreshment was very acceptable; she eat some with sugar; but politeness obliged me to present them to the lady who sat next Charlotte, and she very injudiciously took some. In the third country dance we were the second couple. Heavens! how was I transported with delight as I looked at her arms, and her eyes, which bore the impression of a natural and vivid pleasure? A grave middle-aged lady, whose agreeable physiognomy had engaged me at first appearance, looked at Charlotte with an arch smile, held up her finger in a threatening attitude, and with a very significant accent, said, Albert! Albert!

My curiosity was awakened at this sound. “And who is this Albert, if I am not too inquisitive?” said I to Charlotte. She was just going to answer, when we were obliged to separate to cast off at bottom; and as I passed over again, I thought that she looked pensive. When she gave me her hand again, I repeated

peated the question with more earnestness than before, for indeed I was interested in the matter. "I have no reason to conceal it from you," she said, "but Albert is a worthy character, to whom I am engaged." I was struck at this intelligence, and yet I had been told the same thing before by the lady in the coach; but, alas! I had not yet seen Charlotte; nor did I know her value. Those who have experienced a sudden disappointment in the loss of a beloved object, may have some idea of my confusion. I seemed to hear it for the first time. It so disconcerted me that I footed wrong, spoiled the figure, and put every body out; but Charlotte, by pushing one, and pulling another, with some difficulty set all right once more.

But a greater confusion ensued. During the festivity, the lightning, which had for some time been playing in the horizon, and which I had pronounced to be only the effects of the heat of the season, became much more dreadful, and the thunder reverberated in our ears, notwithstanding the strains of the fiddles. The ladies were alarmed; some ran out of the room; their partners followed; the consternation became general, and the music stopped. It is remarkable, that when any distress or terror assails us in a scene of pleasure, it makes stronger impressions upon our minds than in any other situation; this happens perhaps from the contrast making us feel it more severely; or rather from our senses being more susceptible and awake to all kinds of impressions, the change is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This may account, in some measure, for the extraordinary effects it produced upon the ladies. One of the most spirited sat down with her back to the window, and stopped her ears with her hands;

another fell on her knees before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third reclined behind the other two, and shed abundance of tears: some were clamorous for going home; others, still more affected, did not attend to their indiscreet partners, who, in the fervor of their devotions, were stealing from their lips those sighs which were addressed to heaven. A few of the gentlemen retired below stairs to drink a bottle quietly; and the remainder of the company very obligingly followed the lady of the house, who had the prudence to shew us into a room darkened by close window shutters, and crimson curtains. As soon as we entered, Charlotte drew the chairs round, made us sit in a ring, and proposed some little play, to pass the remainder of the evening. The prudets began to prim up, and more than one of the belles shewed an impatient eagerness for the play, in hopes of some agreeable consequences arising from the forfeits. Charlotte, after a warm debate, proposed the game of counting. Counting was at length fixed upon, and Charlotte laid down the laws of the game. "Observe, I go from right to left; you must count
 " one after another as you sit, and mind and count
 " fast: whoever mistakes or reckons wrong, shall be
 " boxed on the ear, and so on till we have told a
 " thousand." It was laughable to see her go round with her hand elevated. "One," cries the first,
 "two," the second, "three," the third, and so on, till Charlotte went faster and faster, and then they lost their order and mistook: the first got a box on the ear for laughing, the next for saying the wrong number. As to my share I got two; I thought them harder than the rest, and was not a little pleased. However, a general confusion and laughter put an end to our diversion, long before we got to a thousand,

land, our ultimate number. The storm, by this time, was somewhat subsided; the ladies and gentlemen formed small parties, and Charlotte and I returned to the assembly-room. As we were going, the blows, she observed to me, which she had inflicted, made them forget their apprehensions. I must confess I was not myself without fear; but the circumstance made me affect courage to keep up the spirits of the company. The thunder still rolled at a distance; a prolific shower of rain watered the fields, and impregnated the air with the most refreshing smell. I insensibly led Charlotte to the window; I leaned upon her arm; her eyes were fixed on the country before us, then raised up to heaven, and then turned upon me; I could plainly discover they were wet. She sighed, and putting her hand upon mine, pronounced, with strong emphasis, "Klopstock*!" I was so affected with the sensation I then felt; I could no more—I cannot describe my anguish; I sunk beneath its weight; I reclined my face; I could not help the gushing tear: and I wetted her hand. When I turned myself, I looked directly in her face; her countenance was vastly changed; her eyes were suffused with tears. Oh! divine poet! why didst thou not see thy apotheosis in Charlotte's eyes? And thy name so often profaned, wherefore is it ever pronounced by any voice but her's?

* The name of a celebrated poet of Germany, Author of a divine poem, entitled the Messiah. It has been translated into English, and printed in three vols. 12mo.

LETTER XI.^o*June 19.*

I AM in love—I have already forgot where I broke off my story; I recollect nothing about it; all I can tell is, that it was after two in the morning before I got to bed; and if I could have conversed with you then, instead of writing that long letter, I should certainly have kept you awake till it was day light. I think I did not inform you of the particulars which passed in our return from the ball; and to-day, I have neither time nor inclination. The morning was remarkably beautiful and serene at sunrise; the verdure of the fields was refreshed, and the rain still dropt from the pines in the forest. Sleep had closed the eyes of our companions; Charlotte was awake: she asked me if I did not wish to sleep too? and desired I would not make any ceremony on her account. “As long as those eyes continue open,” said I, (looking her stedfastly in the face,) “I cannot close mine.” We continued our conversation till the maid came to the door, and whispered to Charlotte that her mistress waited for her in the other room. I left her, promising to visit her in the course of the day. You need not doubt but I have kept my word; and since that time, the spheres have performed their revolutions unobserved by me: heedless of their motions, I know not whether it is day or night: besides her, the whole world has now no charms for me.

* This letter in the former translation is numbered the twelfth: no eleventh letter occurring there, we have thought it best to follow the original, where the dates determine their succession. TRANSLATOR.

LET-

LETTER XII.

June 22.

HOW happy is my life ! my time flows on as smoothly as we suppose it does with the elect in heaven ; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never say that I have not tasted happiness in this life. I am now settled at Walheim : you know the place : it is only half a league distant from Charlotte ; there secluded from the rest of the world, I enjoy myself, and the most superlative pleasure a mortal is capable of. When I made choice of Walheim for my recess, I little imagined the treasure it contained. How often in my walks have I passed this hunting lodge, which now enshrines the object of all my wishes. Man, unconscious of the riches which surround him, seeks afar for what he may find near home. When he comes back, he often, accidentally, meets with what he has been so long and fruitlessly seeking. I have amused myself with reflecting on the desire men display to extend their views beyond the present scene, and to make new discoveries ; yet after all, there exists in the human mind, a secret impulse, or attraction, which, like a spring, extended to its utmost limits, incline them to recoil back again to their circle, and there enjoy that repose which activity and exertion denies.

When I first arrived here, I was particularly attracted by the splendid beauties of this valley : the wildness of uncultivated nature ; the romantic appearance of broken hills, pointed rocks, little woods, and rivulets of water, interspersed with cottages and inclosures for cattle, make it one of the most agreeable

scites

scenes you can imagine. You who know my turn of mind, can easily conceive what effect this sublime imagery has on me, and with what pleasure I wander amidst these broken hills, and close vallies. I came without having found what I sought, and returned without discovering what I wished. Distant objects, my dear friend, are like events arising from futurity; the sight is lost in the space before us; and our mental perceptions are as uncertain and obscure, as distant objects are to our sight. We feel ourselves powerfully attracted towards the rising scene; we follow the phantoms as they rise; and, after a tedious pursuit, find we have hunted a shadow. So have I observed a determined traveller return home, and find in his own habitation, in the embraces of his wife, in the society of his children and friends, and in the labor necessary to maintain them, all the happiness which in vain he sought amidst toils and perils in the trackless deserts of the world. How strange and various are the ways men pursue the momentary felicity; and how few are they who have a real taste to distinguish it when found!

Here, secluded from the intrusions of the world, I lead a simple life. I rise with the sun, gather my own pease, and sit and shell them in a corner with Homer open before me; and when I am employed in the kitchen making soup, I recollect the lovers of Penelope killing and dressing their own victuals: it gives me the liveliest ideas of the Patriarchal manners in the primitive ages of the world. Heavens be thanked, I can now compare the situation I am in with those recorded in the bible. Happy for me, that my heart is capable of feeling the same innocent and simple pleasure, as the peasant who sees smoking on his table, the vegetables he has raised with his

his own hand, and who, while he enjoys his meal, remembers with delight, the fine mornings in which he sowed them, the sober evenings in which he watered them, and the pleasure he had in beholding them rise and flourish.

LETTER XIII.

June 26.

WEDNESDAY last Mr. M. the Physician, arrived from town, and paid a visit at the steward's. When he came in, he found me upon the floor, diverting myself with Charlotte's children: we were playing of gambols, romping, and making a great noise. The doctor is very ceremonious, very formal, and solemn, and never is seen to smile. He adjusts his ruffles, whilst he is talking with you, and draws up his chitterling to his chin at the conclusion of every speech. He thought this behavior of mine too grotesque for the dignity of a man: and I discovered by his countenance he was much displeased; nevertheless I disregarded his frowns, continued to rebuild the houses of cards, which the children had blown down, and encouraged them to go on with their play. When he got back, he reported, that the steward's children were spoiled bad enough before, but that now Werter was entirely ruining them.

I love children, you know, my dear friend: nothing touches me more than their affections. When I consider them, and observe in the little urchins the seeds which are to produce all those virtues
and

and qualities which will one day be so necessary to them : when I behold in the obstinate all the future firmness, constancy, and steady demeanor of a great and noble character : in the wanton and heedless, that capricious levity, and flow of spirits, necessary to make them pass lightly over the dangers and sorrows of life : and when I see some with all the openness and simplicity of generous minds, then remembrance strikes me in the divine words of our Holy Redeemer, " If ye do not become like one of these." And when I consider these children are our equals ; that they are to succeed us on the stage of life, when we shall be no more : when I see in them the future philosopher, divine mathematician, poet, orator, and statesman, I cannot help admiring their embryo humours, and opening ideas, which are to raise them to their destined elevation ; nor can I forbear lamenting our defective mode of education, which makes subjects and slaves of those whom we ought to look upon as our models, and whom we treat as if they had no will of their own.—Good heavens ! whence derive we our exclusive right ? Have we no will ourselves ? Proceeds it from our age or experience ? *Great Supreme !* thou, who from the height of glory beholdest the great and little children of this world, has long since declared to which thou givest the preference ! And in thy word we also read, " that they believe in him, and do not hear him ; and their children are after their own image."

Adieu, my dear friend. This letter has already run out your patience, I fear—but I know your heart, and I am sure you know Werter's.—Farewell ; remember me.

L E T-

LETTER XIV.

June 29.

I Was fairly bewildered towards the latter end of my last letter, and wandered far from my principal object. Charlotte, I find, will spend some time in town. She is with a worthy woman of her acquaintance, who has been given over by her physicians, and who desired to have Charlotte with her in her last moments. She is a good child, and capable of administering the most balmy consolation to the sick, as I have myself long since experienced, for my poor heart has been much out of order. I went with her last week to see the vicar of S——, a little village in the mountains, about one league from this place. Charlotte's youngest sister went with us, and it was past four o'clock before we got there. When we came into the court, which is shaded by two fine walnut trees, the worthy old man was sitting upon his bench. As soon as he perceived Charlotte, he forgot his old age and his stick, and ventured to advance towards her: but she prevented him, and made him sit down again, and sat herself down by him. She presented a thousand compliments to him from her father, and played with the youngest of his children. I wish you had been there to have observed her attention to this good old man. I wish you had heard her raising her voice, because he is deaf, and telling him with the news of the town; of young and healthy folks who had died suddenly in the bloom of life, when it was the least expected, recommending the Carelstad waters, and approving his intention

tion of visiting that place next summer, if his strength would permit; and assuring him she thought he looked much better than he did the last time he was there. My dear friend, she is an incomparable girl. While their conversation lasted, I paid my devoirs to his wife, who is some years younger than himself. The good old man seemed quite revived in fresh spirits; and as I stood admiring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed such an agreeable shade over our heads, he could not withhold giving us the history of them. "As to that tall one, the oldest of them," said he, "we are ignorant who planted it: some say one vicar, some another. As to the youngest, it is just the same age as my wife; that is, it will be fifty years old exactly next October: her father planted it in the morning of the same day that she came into the world towards the evening. My wife's father, Sir, was my immediate predecessor here, and you cannot imagine how fond he was of this tree; and, upon his account, and my wife's, it is doubly dear to me. It was upon a block of wood, under this very tree, that my wife was sitting and knitting, when I entered this place for the first time, five and twenty years ago." Here Charlotte interrupted him, by inquiring after his daughter. She was gone, he said, with Mr. S. into the meadows, to see the folks at hay-making. He then resumed the course of his narrative, and informed us how he proceeded to get into the good graces of the old vicar, his predecessor, and of his daughter; how he became first his assistant, afterwards his curate, and then his successor. He went on at this rate with the volubility natural to old age, when he was interrupted by the arrival of his daughter, with Mr. S. She affectionately

nately saluted Charlotte, and made me a very modest bow. She has a good clear brown complexion, tall, lively; and a sensible man might pass his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for such Mr. S. immediately seemed to be, has an agreeable person, is genteel and well made, but appeared very reserved, and would not join in the conversation, notwithstanding all Charlotte's endeavors for that purpose. I who always look upon taciturnity as a mark of false breeding, was uneasy at it, because I perceived, by somewhat about him, that it was not for want of talents, but from a capricious and supercilious ill humour. Nothing was more evident afterwards, when we went to take a walk; for whilst I was chatting and laughing with the parson's daughter, the countenance of this gentleman, which before was none of the pleasantest, became so lowry and dark, that Charlotte observing it, pull me by the coat to make me desist. I am much concerned and affected when I see men cross one another; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very season of prime, they waste their few short days of sunshine in idle disputes and contradictions, and are only conscious of their error when it is too late. This consideration dwelt upon my mind; and during our collation, the discourse turning upon the subject of the happiness and misery of this imperfect state, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh severely against ill humour. "How apt we are," said I "to complain that we have but few short happy days; and it appears very plain to me, that we have but little right to find fault. If our hearts were always in a grateful disposition to receive the bounty which God Almighty sends us, we should have sufficient strength

strength to support the ills, when they fall upon us." "But," says the old vicar's wife, "we cannot always rule our tempers; so much depends on the constitution: when the body is indisposed, the mind is disturbed likewise." "Well then, let us look upon this disposition as a disease," I replied, "and see if there is no remedy for it." "That will be more to our purpose," said Charlotte; "and I think, indeed, a vast deal might be remedied in this respect. I know, for example, that when any thing crosses my temper, I can dissipate the ill humour, by turning my thoughts on some pleasing subject, or recalling to mind some agreeable circumstance which I have experienced before; sometimes I step into the garden, sing a lively air, and it vanishes." "Why so I meant," I answered, "ill humour may be compared to sloth. Man is naturally indolent; but if once he overcomes his indolence, he then goes on with pleasure, and finds a real satisfaction in activity." The vicar's daughter listened to me with attention, but did not say any thing. As to the young man, he objected, that we were not free, that is, not enough masters of ourselves, and still less of our feelings. I observed to him, that it was a disagreeable habit which was in question, and one that every body wish to get rid of, at least that all ought to do their endeavors to dissipate as much as possible an evil, which, while supported, only served to destroy the peace of society; that we did not know how far our strength might go, till we had tried it: that the sick consult the physicians, and submit to swallow the most nauseous medicine, to recover their health. I then perceived, that the good old man inclined his head to hearken to our conversation. I therefore raised my voice, and addressing

dress'ing myself to him, said, "There has been a great deal of declamation against all crimes, Sir; but I am not certain that any body has hitherto preached against the spleen." "It is for those who preach in town," said he, "to discourse on that subject; for country folks seldom know what the spleen is; though, indeed, it would not be amiss to do it here now and then, if it was only for the benefit of my wife and the steward." This made us all laugh, and so did he very heartily; but it brought on a fit of coughing, which interrupted us for some time. Mr. S. afterwards resuming the subject, said, "In my opinion you have carried the matter too far in making this indisposition of temper a crime." "It is not, though," answered I, "if what is pernicious to ourselves, and to those about us, deserves the name of crime. Are we not miserable enough in being without the power to make one another happy? but must we deprive each other of that satisfaction, which, save this mental hydra, we might be capable of enjoying? Pray where is the man, shew me him who has ill humour, and who hides it; who stifles the serpent within his own breast, without disturbing the peace and pleasures of those who are near him? No, Sir; ill-humour arises from a consciousness of our want of merit; from a sour discontent concomitant with envy, which is always the result of vain conceit. We dislike to see others happy, when their happiness is not the work of our own hands." Charlotte looked at me, and smiled at the force with which I spoke; and some tears which I perceived in the eyes of the young woman, inclined me to go on. "Ruin seize those," I continued, "who, usurping over a human heart, deprive it of the simple

ple innocent pleasure we should naturally enjoy. All the favors, all the attentions and regard in the world, cannot, for a moment, make satisfaction for the loss of that happiness which a capricious and cruel tyranny destroys." I could go no further, my heart was full; I severely felt the power of my own oratory: some recollections pressed upon my mind, and my eyes were suffused with tears.

"We should address ourselves every day," I exclaimed, "in the words of the celebrated Roman emperor, who cried out, *What good can I do for my friends?* If we cannot immediately render them happy, let us at least endeavor not to interrupt them in their pleasure, but try to increase their contentment, which, rightly considered, will be augmenting our own. Oh! fatal bane of human bliss! Ill-humour, thou source of every ill below—when rent by violent passions, the mind is distracted with cares, or overflown with grief; thy acrimonious poison adds pungency to the sorrow; and when, at last, a fatal disease seizes the unhappy being whose premature grave was prepared by thy hand. When extended on the couch and exhausted, he turns his dying eyes to heaven, and the damps of death run down his brow—then thou standest before him like a convicted criminal: thou beholdest thy fault, but then, alas! it is too late; conscious of thy want of power, thou feelest with bitterness, that all thou canst bestow, all thy attempts and endeavors to restore the strength of thy unhappy victim, are vain and fruitless, nor can procure for him one moment's consolation." In pronouncing these words, the recollection of a similar scene, at which I had been present, obtruded, with all its weight, upon my heart. I felt too much—I

put my handkerchief up to my eyes—I rose and quitted the company. Charlotte’s voice, who called me to go home, brought me to myself; and in our way back, with what tenderness she chid me! With what mildness—how kindly she represented to me, that I was too much affected with every thing I undertook. She urged, and with truth on her side, that the interest, and the heat with which I entered into things, would wear me out before the allotted time, and shorten my days!—Yes, my angel! I will take your advice, I will not accelerate my dissolution, I will preserve—I will take care of myself; for you I will live: I will die for you.

LETTER XV.

July 6.

CHARLOTTE is still by her dying friend: she is still the same; still the same attentive creature, who soothes the agonizing pains of death, and dispenses happiness wheresoever she goes. Yesterday she went out with her little sisters: I was apprised of it, and went out to meet her: we had a very agreeable walk together; and, in our return back, we stopped at the fountain I am so fond of, and which is become a thousand times dearer to me now that Charlotte has sat by the side of its stream. I looked around me, and recalled to mind the time I had spent there, when my heart was my own, alone and unoccupied. When no care invaded my breast. “Dear Spring,” I said, “I have not, since

since that time, tasted cool repose by your refreshing waters ; and often, regardless of the past pleasures I enjoyed, beside your stream, I have passed hastily by, without even thinking of you." I fixed my eyes upon the charmer of my soul, and was struck with a lively sense of all the treasure I possess in her.

P. S. In a few days I will inform you what progress I make in drawing. Mr. M. has furnished me with a story for an historical piece from an English author : it is a very striking one, and the catastrophe in the true taste of Gothic chivalry.—
Adieu.

LETTER XVI.

July 8.

WHAT a childish passion actuates my breast ! I depend upon every turn and change of countenance. How can I be so silly ? A few days ago we visited Walheim. The ladies went in a coach, but got out to walk. Charlotte was remarkably good humoured : whilst we were walking, I thought her eyes had more expression for me ; but perhaps I was mistaken. However, I will inform you in a few words, for I am now dropping asleep. When the ladies got into the carriage again, young Mr. Welt, Selbstadt, Andran, and myself, were talking to them at the window : the young gentlemen were gay and full of spirits. I watched Charlotte's eyes very attentively ; they wandered from one to the other, but did not fix on me ; upon me, who

who stood there motionless, and who saw nothing but her. My heart was in a strange flutter, bidding her adieu a thousand and a thousand times, yet she did not even deign to give me one single look. The coach went off, and a tear was ready to start. I followed her with my eyes: I saw her put her head out. Alas! did she look for me? I cannot say; and uncertainty is my comfort perhaps. Doubts and suspense harass my soul. Was she but mine, or was I but numbered with those who sleep on the lap of earth—Good night—I blush at my own weakness.

LETTER XVII.

July 10.

YOU cannot imagine, my friend, how foolish I look in company, when her name is mentioned, when any one speaks of her, or when some body asks me how I *like* her?—How I like her! Detestable expression. Of what materials must my heart be composed of, merely to *like* her? How I *like* her! Barbarous phrase. Some time ago, I was asked if I *liked* the poems of Ossian?

LET

LETTER XVIII.

July 12.

WOULD that I were not mistaken—Her eyes declare the interest I have in her heart—shall I persuade myself it is so? I feel it. And I may believe the information of my own soul, which intimates that she—dare I pronounce it? Yes, I will write the divine words—she loves me. Heavens! how that idea exalts my soul. How—I will tell you, for you are capable of understanding my thoughts. How I do honor to myself, and cherish my being, since I have been beloved by the dear girl. Surely I am too presumptuous—No, it is a consciousness of truth. And who—who shall supplant me in the art of Charlotte? Yet when I hear her mention Albert with respect and tenderness, I feel my ambition wounded. I find myself then like a proud minister, deprived by his prince of his honors and his titles; or the soldier, whose sword is taken from his side by his general.

LETTER XIX.

July 16.

THERE is a sympathy in love, which lovers only feel. How my heart palpitates, and the purple fluid boils in my veins, when by chance I touch her hand! When my feet meet her's by accident, under the table, I draw them back with precipitation,

cupitation, as from a fire; but a secret power presses me again forward, and puts all my senses into confusion. She makes me her confident, and she little thinks what torment she puts me to, when she communicates those secret marks of friendship in which Albert has a share. I experience an almost electrical shock, when she puts her hand in contact upon mine; or, when in the eagerness of discourse she draws her chair nearer to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips; the sudden effect of lightning is not more powerful. Oh! if ever I should dare—this confidence.—My friend, you know my heart—you know it is not so corrupt: it is weak indeed, very weak; but may not that be a degree of corruption? I look upon her as a superior being, and in her company I desire nothing: when I sit by her my soul is expanded beyond its usual narrow bounds. She plays a favorite air upon her harpsichord, with the sweetness of an angel. As soon as I hear her begin, I recollect all that is related of the magic of ancient music: it is so affecting, and yet so simple, the delightful sounds dissipate sorrow and care. Sometimes, when I am ready to finish my existence, she plays that air, and immediately the gloom, which darkened my intellectual faculty, is dispersed, and I breathe again with my wonted freedom.

LETTER XX.

July 18.

WHAT is the whole world to the heart without love? It is like the Savoyard's optic machine, without light. As soon as it is illuminated, the figures appear on the wall; and if love only shews us shadows which pass away, why may not we still be happy, when, like children, we are pleased with shining phantoms? I am prevented by the unavoidable ceremony of company from seeing Charlotte to day. And what do you think I have done? I sent my servant to ask her for the favor of the book she was reading last night, that I might at least have something which had lately been in her hands. With what impatience I waited for his coming back; and with what pleasure I saw him return! As soon as he was withdrawn, I kissed the book a thousand times. The famous stone of Bologna, when placed in the sun, is said to attract its rays, and retains them, so as to give light a considerable time after it is removed into the dark. The book was just the same thing to me. The thought that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on its pages, that her fingers had turned over its leaves, made it so dear, so interesting to me—I would not at that time have taken a thousand crowns for it. Methinks you laugh at this story; but beware of ridiculing me, my good friend: nothing which contributes to our happiness is an illusion.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

July 19.

HOW slow is the motion of time to him who lives in expectation. As soon as I opened my window this morning, I looked at the sun, and I said to myself, "This day I shall see her," and I calmly shut it again. Yes, I shall see her, and I have no other wish to form for this whole day: all, all, every desire is included in that thought. Oh! time! could I but add another pair of wings to assist thy flight—but vain is every sigh, and fruitless every wish to accelerate thy leaden motion.

LETTER XXII.

July 20.

INDEED, my friend, I cannot approve your scheme of sending me to the ambassador. I hate subordination and ceremony; and we all know too, that he is a stern disagreeable man to have any connection with; he tires one so with forms. You write, my mother wishes to hear I am employed. The idea makes me laugh. Am I ever idle? And if I am but shelling peas and beans, it is, in fact, just the same. In this world all is misery; and those who, in compliance with its customs, are accumulating riches, or acquiring honors, are, in my opinion, madmen.

LETTER XXIII.

July 24.

AS you interest yourself so much about my progress in drawing, I am sorry to inform you I have hitherto done very little in that way. I have had an historical piece a long time before me, but I cannot get forward with it. My disposition is more after nature; I understand her better: I love to copy her sublime parts; but, alas! my state of mind is such, that I am incapable of the application and perseverance necessary to enter into the minute details, and express the smaller beauties of her appearance. My executive powers fail; I cannot make an outline; every thing seems to swim before my sight; and I think I should succeed better, if I was to attempt something in relief. If this disorder lasts any longer, I shall make an essay with clay or wax. I have three times begun Charlotte's picture, and as many times dishonored my pencil. My mind is disturbed with fears. I am not as usual. Formerly I was reckoned happy in taking likenesses; but I cannot tell how it is my hand is out. Some time ago I made a profile of her, and I must content myself with that sketch.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

July 27.

I HAVE several times taken the resolution not to see her so often ; but I find it easier to talk than to act. Every day produces new temptations, and every day I yield to their importunity ; and when I return at night, I say to myself, I will not go to-morrow : to-morrow comes, and lo, I find myself with her again, and cannot account how it happened. My good friend imagine not, however, that good reasons are always wanting. One evening she says, “ You'll come again to see us to-morrow.” How could I then avoid going the next day ? Another time the weather is so fine, I must walk out. My steps naturally tend to Walheim ; and when I find myself there, it is but half a league farther. I remember a story my grandmother used to tell, of a huge mountain of loadstone : when unfortunately any vessel approached it, the nails flew out of her sides to the mountain, and the unhappy crew perished amidst the loosened planks. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

August.

WELL, Albert is arrived at last—Was he the very model of perfection, and I in every respect his inferior, it could not be more disagreeable

ble to me to see him in possession of so many charms, and so many perfections. I have seen my dear friend, this happy husband: he is a handsome well-bred worthy man, whom one cannot help liking at first sight. It was a happy circumstance for me I was not present at their first meeting; I should have been distracted: however, he has been so obliging as not to kiss Charlotte once before me. Heaven recompence him for it! The tender regard he shews for this charming girl, obliges me to love and esteem him. He shews me many marks of respect; but I am certainly indebted to Charlotte for it. Women always endeavor to keep up a good understanding between their friends: sometimes it does not succeed; but when it does, they are sure to be the gainers by it. Indeed, my friend, I cannot help esteeming Albert: the smoothness and calmness of his temper forms a striking contrast with the irregularity and impetuosity of mine; and yet his feelings are fine; for though cool, he is not phlegmatic, and he knows the value of the happiness which he possesses. He seems very little subject to ill humor; which, you know, of all faults, is that which I can least excuse. He has a high opinion of me, and, perhaps, over-rates my abilities. He looks upon me as a man of genius and taste. My attachment to Charlotte; the disinterested regard I shew for every thing that relates to her, increase his love and his happiness. I will not be so presumptuous as to assert that he may not sometimes in private tease and torment her with little jealousies: for as to me, was I in his place, I know I should not be quite easy. However that may happen, the pleasure I enjoyed with Charlotte, is at an end. What
name

name shall I give it ? shall I call it blindness, folly, or infatuation ? But it wants no appellative ; it is too obvious—fascination. Before Albert arrived, I knew all that I now know ; I was well aware I could have no pretensions to her, and I did not claim any ; and now behold here I am, like a fool lost in amazement ; staring with surprise, because another has taken her from me. I reflect on my past folly ; I hate and despise myself ; but I should despise him still more, who could tell me coolly, that I must reconcile myself to the contingencies of my fate, for it could not happen otherwise. Let me never meet such silly persons !—Yesterday, after having walked a long time in the woods, I returned to her house : she was with Albert sitting in an arbor. I did not know what to do with myself—I danced, I sung, I played the fool, and was guilty of a thousand other extravagancies. “ For heaven’s sake,” said Charlotte to day, “ let me beg of you that we may have no more of your mad scenes like that you exhibited last night ; you are quite alarming in your violent high spirits.” By way of confidence betwixt ourselves, I have taken the liberty to watch Albert’s motions ; and when he is engaged I go there, and I cannot tell you what pleasure I find when I meet her there alone.

LETTER XXVI.

August.

I NEVER imagined, my dear friend, when I conversed with those people who advised me to reconcile myself to this event, as to a matter which, in the chain of things, was unavoidably to come to pass, that you could possibly be one of the number: but perhaps you are in the right. I can only object, that of two opposite methods which are proposed, one seldom follows either. There are as many distinct lines of conduct and opinion, as there are turns of feature in the phases of the human countenance. Now, give me leave to grant all your conclusions, and contrive a middle way for myself, to slide on between them. You argue with me, that I either see a possibility of obtaining Charlotte, or that I do not. In the first place, I ought to follow my intent, and press forwards to the accomplishment of my wishes. In the other case, you gravely advise me to act as becomes a man, and banish from my mind an unfortunate affection, which is like to consume my strength, and end in sorrow. All this is right; your observations are very just, and very easy for you to make too.

Would you advise a man in a deep consumption, whose constitution is wearing fast away, to put a period to his miseries by a sword, or a pistol? Does not the same disease, which is preying on his vital parts, deprive him of the resolution necessary for perpetrating a deed which requires a
strength

Strength of mind, as well as of body? But as there is no end to comparisons, you might justly, in return, send me a simile of the same kind. Who would not lose a member, rather than hazard his life by deferring the amputation? Many perhaps there are that would. But let us leave these odious parables. There are times in which my resolution would carry me beyond this scene, and I certainly should retire, if I knew whither to go.

LETTER XXVII.

August 10.

THERE seldom happens in the life of any one man, so many agreeable circumstances to make him happy, as unite together to make me so. But alas! I feel but too sensibly, that happiness depends entirely on the mind. If to be considered as making one in the most amiable and united family in the world: if to be beloved by the father as a son; by the children as a brother, and by Charlotte, by this worthy Albert, who studies, by every cordial affection to make me his own, and prefers me to nothing but to Charlotte: I say, if this can constitute happiness, why am not I the happiest mortal existing? My dear friend, how you would delight to hear us, when we are talking together of Charlotte. Indeed, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection; and I frequently unman myself, and soften even to shedding of tears. When he mentions Charlotte's most respectable mother

mother; when he describes to me her last moments, and the most affecting scene in which she gave up to her daughter the care of her children and her family; when he relates how this amiable and dutiful child immediately assumed another character; what a skilful œconomist, and an active house-wife she became, and what a tender mother; every day displaying amidst the pious qualities of a sage governess, the agreeable cheerfulness and vivacity of a young girl; I walk by his side, pick up flowers by the way, and with great attention make a nosegay: I gaze a while at the flowers as I walk, and then throw it into the first brook I come to, and observe it attentively as it glides gently down the stream. I forgot, I do not recollect whether I ever mentioned in my letters that Albert is to settle here. He has obtained a place at court which brings him in a considerable salary. He is much esteemed there. You will find few men so punctual and methodical in business. He is one of those happy few, whom nothing discomposes, and will transact more in one hour, than many can in two, and that without ever going out of his tract, or appearing in haste.

LETTER XXVIII.

August 12.

ALBERT is certainly one of the best men, and singular characters in the world. We had a very remarkable conversation together yesterday, which I shall here relate to you. I took
it

it into my head, you must know, to go and spend a few days in the mountains, from whence I now write to you ; so going to take my leave of him, as I was walking backwards and forwards in his apartment, I espied his pistols. I requested of him the favor to lend them to me for my journey. " They are much at your service," said he, " if you will take the trouble to load them, for I only keep them there for show." I took them down, and he continued : " Ever since I had like to have suffered for my precaution, I have left off keeping loaded fire arms by me." I asked him how the accident happened. " I was at a friend's house in the country," he replied, " my pistols were loaded, and I slept in perfect security ; but it happened, as I was sitting one rainy afternoon, and wanting nothing but employment, it popped into my head, I cannot tell how, that the house might be attempted to be robbed, and that these pistols might be of service to—and that we might—in short, you know how one goes on when one has nothing else to do. I called my servant, and bade him clean and load my pistols. I do not know how, but he was foolishly playing with the maid, and trying to frighten her, when one of the pieces went off : the ramrod was in ; it went against the girl's hand, and carried off her thumb. You may imagine the outcries and lamentations we had ; and besides, a surgeon's bill to pay : since that accident the pistols have remained untouched. You see how short is all human precaution. We cannot, my good friend, prevent or foresee the dangers which hang over our heads." Indeed, I like every thing in this man, but his *indeeds* ; and every rule has an exception. Nothing can exceed
his

his exactness and correct behavior. Besides, he is of such perfect veracity and rectitude, that if he thinks he has risked too much, or not been strictly true, he moderates and qualifies his assertion, and extenuates the rigedness of what he has advanced, that we find at last he has said nothing at all. Albert had begun, and now, according to his custom, was immerfed in his text. His words were lost upon me, for I was lost in thought : in my reverie, I put the mouth of the pistol to my forehead. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the pistol. "It is not charged," I said. "And though it is not," he replied with warmth, "what do you mean by it? It surpasses my comprehension, how a man should be so mad and so desperate as to shoot himself; the very thought of it makes me shudder." "Pray Sir," said I, "what right has any man, in speaking of an action, immediately to decide that it is bad, wise, or good? What do you mean by all this? Have you carefully investigated the motives which prompt the action? Have you carefully examined, and fairly unfolded all the reasons which gave it birth, and which made it necessary? If you had done all this, you would not be so hasty with your decision." "But again," rejoined Albert, "won't you allow that some actions are criminal in their nature, notwithstanding the motives for committing them were not so?" I granted his position, and shrugged up my shoulders. "But hear me a little longer." I agreed. "There are more exceptions to make. Thieving is a crime; but the man who is urged to it by extreme penury, with no other design than to save himself and his family from perishing for want;

want ; must he also be punished ? and is he not rather an object of our compassion ? Say, tell me, who shall cast the first stone at a husband, who, in the height of just resentment, sacrifices an unfaithful wife, and her insidious seducer ? or, at a young girl, whom love only has led astray ? Do not our laws, our pedantic, our cold, cruel laws, relent ; and relaxing their usual severity, withdraw their penal shock ?” “ These are very different examples,” replied Albert ; “ because a man, under the influence of violent rage, anger, or passion, is incapable of reflection, and is deemed, in these cases, as drunk, or mad : he is supposed to be in a state of delirium, or out of his senses.” “ Oh ! you quiet insensible souls, ye people of cool reflection and sound understanding,” I replied, smiling, “ you are very ready to condemn the actions of others, inspired with more spirit than yourselves : with what unconcern you pronounce sentence, and discourse of extravagance, madness, and intoxication : you are insensible yourselves, and careless of all around you : you shun the drunkard, and condemn the extravagant ; and, priest like, pass them uncharitably by : like the Pharisee in the gospel you return thanks to heaven you are not like one of them. The effect of drinking I have often felt ; my passions have always bordered upon extravagance ; many of my actions have been tinged with madness, and yet I am not ashamed to own it. Have not the great in all ages been deemed mad, and has not the world treated them as if they were intoxicated ? Even in private life too, is it not obvious and insufferable, that if a young man performs any remarkable, noble, or generous action, *they* immediately
say

say he is out of his mind? Shame, shame upon you, ye sages of the earth."—"There now, this is one of your extravagant flights," cried Albert, "you always overshoot the mark: and here you are most assuredly wrong, to compare suicide, which is the subject in question, with great actions; for it can only be looked upon as a weakness, and whoever becomes guilty, stains his character with the perpetration of the most cowardly deed. It was much easier for Cato to fall upon his own sword, than to face his misfortunes with fortitude."

LETTER XXIX.

IN CONTINUATION.

NOTHING puts me so much out of patience as the repetition of common-place opinions, when I am discoursing earnestly from the bottom of my heart. I was upon the point of concluding the conversation abruptly: however, I got the better of myself; for having often heard this pitiful argument, I now commenced to be used to it. But I replied with some energy, "you call this a weakness; take care you are not borne away by sounds. Suppose a nation, groaning under the iron hand of oppression; are they to be called weak, when at last they throw it off, and trample on their chains? He, who to save his house from the flames, which have already invaded it, exerts all his strength, carries burthens with ease that he could scarcely lift when his mind was undisturbed; he who defeats and puts to flight half a score of his enemies; are these weak people?"

people? My worthy friend, if resistence is a criterion of superior power, can the highest degree of resistence be called a weakness?" Albert did not immediately reply; he looked gravely at me a minute, and then said, "Begging your pardon, Sir, I think all the examples you have brought are foreign to the subject under consideration." "Very likely," I answered, "for I have often been told that my way of associating things appeared rather extravagant. But let us try and set this subject in another point of view: let us enquire what is the situation of a man who resolves to lay down the burthen of life—a load that is in general so much desired, and its continuation so much implored—let us examine the state of things within him, and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwise fairly argue on this subject. Human nature, I continued, has certain bounds; there is a degree of pleasure, pain, and grief, which is as capable of enduring, and beyond the limits of which degree, it is annihilated.

"It is not, therefore, our business to enquire whether a man is weak or strong, but whether he can transcend the bounds of nature, and pass the measure of his sufferings, either mental or corporeal; and I verily think it is as absurd to assert, that a man who puts a period to his existence here is a coward, as to call him so, who dies of disease in his bed." "Paradox! by heavens all paradox!" exclaimed Albert, rising from his chair. "Not quite so paradoxical, Sir, as you think for," I replied; "for, first, you must grant that we reckon a disease mortal, in which nature receives so deep a wound, and her strength is so far exhausted, that what remains is insufficient to set her

her machinery a going again. Now, my friend, let us apply this to the mind, and examine how the ideas work, and how impressions settle upon it, till at last a violent passion takes entire possession, destroys all the powers it possessed before when at ease, and entirely change the direction of its operations. It is in vain that a man, whose mind is cool, and consequently unagitated, sees the miserable situation of the infatuated wretch in such circumstances; advice is given to him in vain, and those who counsel him are like people in health who visit the bed of the sick man, but are unable to communicate to him any portion of their strength."

Albert thought this reasoning too general. He observed, that there was a certain determined end in which all the designs of nature are centered; and all beings agreed to acknowledge that life was a blessing, and that the production and preservation of it, was the ultimate end of their existence. "Those signs of joy and gaiety," said he, "manifest in all their motions, prove that life has its sweets for all, even the lowest class of animals, and that they are capable of enjoying them. Men in particular are on the side of reason, better able to do justice in this respect to the gift of their creator: they love the life he has conferred, and watch over it as their greatest good. If there are some disordered souls that regard it as a burden, and delight to represent it in this view, their judgement ought not to counterbalance that of mankind in general; their voice should not silence the voice of nature, nor from particular cases draw general conclusions, and then venture to assert that the measure of misery exceeds that of happiness."

pinels. Life, we say, is a blessing ; and it is the will of the creator that innumerable multitudes enjoy this blessing. Amidst a variety of other worlds, he has created this we inhabit : a world, diversified with mountains, plains, refreshed with rivers and lakes, enriched with plants and trees, warmed and enlightened by the rays of the sun : a world, where invisible causes preserve in perpetual circulation, the elements impregnated with every principle of life ; where the vegetables, by secret powers, still more mysterious, attract and collect these rich treasures of the elements, and prepare them for the support of the animated creation : a world, where, such is the infinite variety and number of the species, every thing is converted into a living substance, as it were, and where all second causes, every event, and every being, are by eternal and immutable laws, rendered subservient to the production and conservation of life : where, if the species multiply, it is speedily to repair the losses to which their frailty exposes them : where, if they destroy each other ; if the term of their existence is confined to certain limits, it is to prevent their increase from becoming excessive. In a word, the grand object which the whole plan of nature has in view, is the plenitude and support of the animated system. There are general laws which impel every class of beings to promote this design : and these laws are so intimately connected, that they are necessarily productive of each other.

“ It is alledged, that there are contradictions in the plan of providence. But if the end proposed be such as I have represented, certainly a wiser one could not have been invented, nor more efficacious.

efficacious means contrived, fully to accomplish this great end, than those I have ascribed to him, and which are obvious to every one who contemplates his works. In which then do these contradictions consist? If there is a contradiction in the animal system, it is centered in man, to whom God has given understanding to know, reason to discern, and a heart to love the truth, though he turns from her every time she appears before him. I know that many have undertaken to explain the origin of physical evil in the world; and it is acknowledged they have treated this subject with much perspicuity, penetration, and care; yet after all, the principal question remains unresolved, which is, to reconcile certain appearances in nature, with our ideas of infinite wisdom and goodness. Discussions of this kind, my friend, are like calculations in algebra or arithmetic; a mistake in the denomination of a single term, renders the conclusions false, however just the reasonings may otherwise be, upon which this conclusion is founded."

Here I interrupted him. I instanced the girl who lately drowned herself, and made him recollect her story. "A good friendly young creature, so accustomed to the narrow circle of her situation, and so domesticated in the sphere of household work, and the business of the week, that she knew of no greater pleasure but taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing once perhaps in the holidays, and the rest of her time only talking with her next neighbor about the news, weddings, and little quarrels of the village. Love, at length, invades her heart; she feels new and unknown wishes; all her former

mer amusements displease, and, by degrees, become tasteless and insipid : her old acquaintance are neglected. Nothing but the man for whom she has inspired a new affection, invisibly attacks her : from hence her hopes are all centered in him ; the whole surrounding world is forgotten by her ; she desires nothing but him ; he is the only object of her thoughts by day, as well as theme of her dreams by night. Her sincere heart being a stranger to vanity and coquetry, her wishes tend immediately to the object of them ; she hopes to be his by the most solemn contract, and in bonds which can only expire with life, expects to enjoy all the desires of her heart, and to realize those ideas of happiness which her fond imagination has formed. His ardent vows, and repeated promises, confirm her hopes : his fondness encreases her passion ; her whole soul is absorbed in the contemplation of future pleasures ; her heart is all on fire ; and rapture succeeds the blaze ; at last the fatal moment arrives ; she stretches out her arms to embrace the object of her affections—The scene changes ; her lover forsakes her. Amazed ! confounded ! she stands senseless before the abyss of misery she sees encompass her about ; all around is darkness ; for her there is no prospect, nor hope, nor consolation : she is forsaken by the man in whom her life was wound up ; and in the vast universe which is before her, and among so many who might repair her loss, she feels herself alone, and abandoned by the whole world. Thus disappointed, thus impelled, by the pungent sorrow which harrows her heart, she wrings her hands : but before she plunges into the stream, lifting up her eyes to heaven, she repeats a stanza

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stanza she remembers of a song she learnt in her better days, but the sense of which she never felt before :

Alas, fond man ! there'll come a day,
When you'll of this repent ;
Youth like your passion will decay,
Remember life's but lent :
And when death's dart attacks thy heart,
Perhaps thou'lt think of me ;
Besides the tale that did prevail,
And wrought my misery.

She makes the fatal leap : the surface of the watery mirror is ruffled for a moment ; it closes over her head, and she feels her torments no more. Such, Albert, is the story of many men ; and is it not a parallel case with illness ? Nature has no way to escape : her powers exhausted cannot contend with the difficulties which seem increasing as she goes, and death must be the consequence. Woe unto those who could hear this situation described, and who could say, " A foolish creature ! Why did not she wait till time had worn off the impression ? her despair would have been softened, her love of life would have returned, and she would have found another lover to comfort her." Might not I as well say of a man, A fool ! he died of a fever : why did he not wait till he had recovered his strength, till his blood was calmed ? then he would have recovered, and all would have been well : he would have been still alive.

Albert, who would not allow the comparison to be just, made many objections : he urged, that I had only brought the example of a simple ignorant girl ; but that still he could not comprehend how a man of sense, whose views are more extended, and who sees such various consolations,

lations, should ever suffer himself to fall into such a dilemma of despair. "My good friend," said I, "whatever is the education of a man; whatever is his understanding, still he is a man; and the little reason that he possesses, either does not act at all, or act very weakly, when the passions are let loose; or rather when the boundaries of human nature close upon him.—But enough of this now; we will resume this subject another time," I said, and put my hat on.—My heart was full; and, like theological disputants, we parted without conviction on either hand. Alas! how rarely do men understand one another!

LETTER XXX.

August 15.

IT is most certain that what renders men necessary to each other, is a familiarity of taste and sentiment. I can perceive that Charlotte would not lose me without regret: and as to the children, they never forget to ask me to come again on the morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's harpsichord, but I could not accomplish that business; for all the children came about me, and desired I would tell them a story. Charlotte was desirous that I should please them, so I related my best tale of the Prince that was served by dwarfs. You cannot think how I improve by this exercise: I am quite surprized at the impression these stories make upon childrens minds. If I at any time change an incident, and afterwards

afterwards restore it, the little arch rogues never fail to tell me it was otherwise the first time I told that story. I see by this how much an author injures his works, by altering them even for the better. The first impression makes the deepest marks, and stamps the future character of the piece. We are naturally inclined to hearken to the marvellous ; it affects the mind ; it dwells on the memory ; and woe unto those who would afterwards attempt to efface it !

LETTER XXXI.

August 17.

THAT which constitutes the happiness of man, must it then change and become the source of his misery ? that ardent sentiment which animated my heart with the love of nature, which poured in upon me a torrent of pleasure, which brought all heaven before me, is now changed to an insupportable torment, a dæmon which pursues and harrasses me incessantly. In former times, I contemplated from the top of some high rock the broad river, which far as eye could reach, watered this fertile plain. Propagation extended wide before me ; the landscape round was in motion. I saw these mountains covered to their summits with high and tufted trees, and the vallies sheltered in their various windings by smiling greens ; the winding stream gently glided through the umbrageous shade, and in its calm surface reflected the light clouds, which a soft zephyr kept suspended in

in the air. With what pleasure I then heard the sweet choristers of the woods in their gratulatory song. Millions of insects enjoyed the glorious scene, and sported in the purple rays of the sun. The arid rock was not destitute of vegetation; it afforded nourishment to the moss; and the sands below were covered with broom. The prolific heat, which animates all nature, was every where displayed before my eyes; it revelled in my heart. I was lost in the contemplation of infinity. Stupendous mountains surrounded me; precipices crossed my way; torrents fell by my side; impetuous rivers divided the plains; rocks and hills resounded from a distance, and in the cavities of the earth beheld innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to an infinity. All the animated creation move upon the surface of the earth and in the air; and man secrets himself from view in his little hut, and says, "I am the Lord of this vast creation." Weak mortal! all things appear little to you, for you are little yourself. Ragged rocks, untrodden wilds, deserts never explored by the face of man, even the unknown, the unfathomed depths of the immense ocean are animated by the breath of *life*, and every atom to which he has given animation, exults and finds favor in his sight. Ah me! how often at that time has the flight of a sea bird, which passed over my head, inspired my soul with the desire to be transported to that shore for ever crowned with an azure sky, there to drink the waters of life as in a river, and to partake, if it was but for a moment, and with the confined powers of my soul, of the sublime beatitude of the creator, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being!*

My

My worthy friend, the bare recollection of these times still gives me pleasure: the force of imagination, the energy of mind with which I recall the sensations, which empowers my faculties to express them, raises me above myself, and gives an edge to my present anguish. She is removed, the scene changes; instead of prospects of eternal life, an unfathomable pit is for ever open before me. Can we say of any thing, that it exists, when all passes away, when time in its rapid course wafts every thing with it, and our transitory existence, is either overwhelmed in the tide, or dashed against the rocks? Nothing can escape the progress of time, his subduing hand deals impartially with the palace and the cot; matter is not the only object of his anatomising power, he has consigned to oblivion the name of many a hero to whom the poet and historian had promised immortality. There is not a moment which does not prey upon me, and all around me; and every moment I am a ruthless destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life miriads of minute insects; each of which separately feels as great a pang in its dissolution as a giant: one step destroys the curious fabric of the industrious ant, and changes a little world into a chaos! It is not the great and unusual calamities of the world; the floods which sweep away whole villages; the earthquakes that swallow up our towns, which touch and affect me. The cause of my sorrow, is that destructive hidden power which, though latent, is inherent in all things; the most, compact bodies, the substances of the firmest texture contain the principles of their own dissolution. Nature has formed nothing that does not consume

consume itself momentarily. Thus encompassed by all the benefits and beauties of the creation, I wander with an aching breast; and the wide expanded universe presents to me but a fearful monster, which devours what it has regorged.*

LET-

* Nothing can be more erroneous than this method of reasoning. Werter was in one of those gloomy moments when things appear in an inverted point of view. What he objects to, are the necessary consequences of the law of multiplication, which introduces into the world a much greater proportion of life than what could otherwise take place. A celebrated writer has observed, with great ingenuity and reason, that "the carnivorous animals could not subsist without the frugivorous, and these would be extinguished by the depredations of the other species, were they not remarkably prolific. Without this law of multiplication, animal life cannot exist, or would exist for a short period only. Life is no other than a web of curious contexture, wrought with soft, weak, fragile, delicate materials, forming all together a piece admirable in its construction and destination, but for this very reason subject to ten thousand accidents. To imagine that life could subsist without such an assemblage, is to confound it with the existence of pure intelligences: to imagine that Beings formed upon these principles, could perpetuate their own existence without successive generations, is to attribute to them contradictory qualities. Poets have dreamed of deities, who, though furnished with arms, legs, and in short, with a body similar to the human, are yet destitute of human blood, and can exist without the same kind of nourishment. Fabulists, on the other hand, have formed of human flesh and blood invulnerable, invisible, immortal beings; but they have exceeded the productions of the Omnipotent. He has formed all the inhabitants of the world from the dust of the earth, and until He may think it proper to change their natures, they must inevitably return to dust. Mortal and corruptible, they cannot, at the same time, be immortal, incorruptible.

LETTER XXXII.

August 20.

IN vain I stretch out my arms towards her, when I awake in the morning, after the nocturnal vision of sleep; it is in vain that I seek her, when a pleasing dream has happily deceived me, and

tible.—Sovereign wisdom might have introduced a gigantic race into the animal system, against whom all created powers might in vain have exhausted their fury. A race whom our seas could not overwhelm, nor our mountains bury under their enormous bulk. But such a race would necessarily require a world large in proportion, or it could not contain them. Whatever size therefore we may attribute to the individuals of the animal system, it must be as nothing compared to the world they inhabit; and their power compared with second causes, which animate the world, must be as less than nothing. Animal life, therefore, necessarily supposes beings that cannot perpetuate themselves without re-production in successive generations. And as they are exposed to numberless disasters, which might sweep away multitudes before they had obeyed the laws of nature in this respect, it is requisite that their re-production should be more than simple. Was it the established order that no more than two should spring from two, it is evident that such a number would not be sufficient to perpetuate any one of the species. For it is natural to imagine, that some time is to elapse betwixt the birth of an individual, and its re-production; but should they be destroyed during this interval, the loss of the species would be irreparable: and as these losses would unavoidably be repeated, they must, at length, occasion the extinction of the whole race. There is no danger of exaggeration in asserting that it is necessary that such a re-production should be six, ten, a hundred fold, or sometimes more, according to the nature of the species, and the particular circumstances

and placed me by her side, where I held her hand and ardently kissed it : alas, when half sunk in the soft lap of slumber, I still fondly imagine I touch her : starting I then awake and give vent to my oppressed heart in a flow of tears. Alas, when I reflect that there is no consolation for me, I weep over the sorrows to come.

L E T -

ees of their situation ; that the generation it produces should follow each other in swift succession, so that whenever any species suffers a considerable loss, by those catastrophes which happen in the world, it may be speedily recruited, and leave no void in the scale of existence. This also shews the intention of Providence in confining the existence of every individual within such contracted limits. For as the natural frailty of animal life renders the increase of individuals necessary, this increase makes it necessary in return to shorten the space of their existence. For should it extend beyond a certain term, it is plain that this law of multiplication would prove, for the most part, too luxuriant in its effects, that is, it would produce pernicious effects. Though the devastations which war, disasters, diseases, infirmities, occasion, are at certain seasons immense, and more than what is requisite to check the undue increase of any species, there are other seasons in which they produce not these effects. And since Providence governs the world by general laws, since the events which take place in it cannot contradict these laws, but prove subordinate to them, it is necessary, besides the coercive laws which oppose this undue increase of the species, that there should be some general one which limits the existence of every thing to a certain period. The law of multiplication, and such a period of existence as would render this multiplication excessive, are absolutely incompatible. It is also probable that the term of existence natural to each being, is according to the produce of this multiplication compared with the time allotted for its repetition. Providence has permitted but a few moments of existence to those insects which are hourly renewing their generations. Those quadru-

LETTER XXXIII.

August 22.

I AM quite changed—My activity degenerates into uneasy indolence;—I am listless—indifferent to every thing; yet I cannot remain idle a moment. I am unable to think—reflection harrows my soul;—I am insensible to the beauties of nature, and books are disgusting to me.—When the mind is wrapped up in the contemplation of a beloved object, and we give ourselves up entirely to it, every faculty fails us.—I often wish I were a mechanic; for then, when the morning came, I should have some pursuit; hope, and my daily task, would bear me through the tedious day. How I envy Albert, when I see him intrenched up to his head in papers and parchment; then I say to myself, if I were in thy place, I should be happy. I have often thought of writing to the minister, for the place which you think I might obtain. I am apt to flatter myself I might have it. He has long shewn a

ped and birds that soon become capable of propagation, arrive at the end of their course by the time that other species, less prolific, have scarce entered upon theirs. This law is particularly obvious in domestic animals. The canine race, cats, hogs, seldom exceed a dozen years, whilst horses, asses, cows, live, according to the common course of nature, to a much longer period. Men who require a certain number of years before they are ripe for propagation, and consequently multiply slowly, enjoy a much longer extent of existence than is granted to almost any other animated being."

deal

deal of respect for me, and has even told me I ought to get into some employment. It is only the business of an hour : but when I recollect the fable of the horse, when tired of his liberty, suffered the man to saddle him, had soon reason to repent : I apply the thing to myself, and hesitate, and then do not know how to act, or what to determine upon. My dear friend, you must not attribute the desire to change, to that restless turbulent spirit, which would equally pursue me in every station of life ; but to an honest desire to obviate the objection of malevolent people, and essay whether occupation and change would not relieve my perturbed spirit.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

August 28.

IF my distractions could admit of any cure, I should certainly find it here. This day, my dear friend, is my natal one. Early this morning I received a small parcel from Albert : heaven knows with what joy I opened it : Charlotte had directed it ; there I found one of the knots which she wore upon her sleeve the first time I was in her company, and which I had several times asked her to give me. Albert had inclosed two volumes in 12mo. of Westein's Homer, which I had for some time wished to possess, the edition of the Ernesti being too heavy for me to carry, when I walked abroad. Thus, my dear friend, you see

how they prevent my wishes ; how attentive they are to all those small minutias of friendship, so superior to the ostentatious display of magnificent connections, which are always humiliating. With raptures I kissed the sleeve-knot a thousand times, and every time I inspired delight from the recollection of happy days—days which, alas, will return no more ! Such, my friend, is our hard fate. I do not repine, or murmur at it—the flowers of life but just shew themselves. How swift they fade away, and leave no trace behind ! Few are succeeded by fruit, and the fruit, how seldom it matures to ripeness ! Ah me ! how strange and various are the ways of men, my dear friend, that they should suffer to perish and decay the little which remains !—Farewell ! It is the most pleasant weather I ever beheld. In Charlotte's orchard, I often climb into a tree, and gather pears for her : she stands under it, and catches them as I drop them down.

LETTER XXXV.

August 30.

FOOL that I am, to take pleasure in deceiving myself. What will become of me, and of this ardent passion, I cannot imagine. My prayers are addressed to Charlotte ; my thoughts are entirely occupied with her ; I see nothing but her : all that surrounds me is of no account, but as it is related to this charming girl—and in this situation I enjoy a few happy hours, till I am obliged

obliged to tear myself from her: and to that, alas! my heart often forces me! Sometimes, when I have been sitting by her two or three hours, quite absorbed by her figure, her attitudes, her divine expressions, the sentiment by degrees takes possession of my soul, and is worked up to such an height, that my sight is confused; my heart palpitates; my head turns round, and I scarcely know where I am, or whether I live—And then, if soft sensation do not prevail, as it perhaps may happen; if Charlotte will not permit me the melancholy consolation of kissing her hand, and bathing it with my tears, I am under the necessity of leaving her to run and wander about the country: there, without direction, I climb rugged rocks; I break my way through copses amongst thorns and briars, which tear me to pieces, and then I shed a flood of tears, and feel some relief. Sometimes I lie stretched upon the sword, overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirst: there sometimes, till it is late in the night, when the moon shines upon my head, I lean against a bending tree in some sequestered place, and vent my grief in useless complaints; when quite worn out and exhausted, I sleep till break of day. Oh! my friend, the darkened cell, the sockcloth, the girdle set with sharp points of iron, would be indulgence and luxury, compared with the torments of my mind.—Farewell—I can see no end to these sufferings, but in the grave.

LETTER XXXVI.

Sept. 1.

HOW pleasant, my dear friend, are the flights of imagination! they sooth the soul; and, like oil spread on the surface of the ocean, smoothe the way through the salt stream of life. Yesterday I was amusing myself with the contemplation of the effects my death would have on Charlotte. Surely she would grieve—I just mentioned the subject to her, and she kindly chid me for my presumption. If after we have shifted the present body, we can revisit the scene of our former state, and are conscious of ourselves, how sweet must be the appearance of the unfeigned sorrow for our departure—when we hear the good things said to our memory—when we may understand of what value we once were to them, and how they lament their loss.—Yes, my dear friend, I am fond of these solemn representations; I indulge the thoughts, and wrapt up in them, transport myself beyond the confines of this world—there I participate in spirit of the state of the elect. I then revisit Charlotte, and think I see her pensive, her head reclined upon her arm, and a tear just falling down her cheek. I fancy myself standing before her, and for a few minutes visible to her eye. Last night my mind was sufficiently calmed by this indulgence, to make some verses upon my supposed return :

When sable night had darkness spread,
And silence reign'd around,

Then

A GERMAN STORY.

81

Then Charlotte sought her lonely bed,
With melancholy crown'd.

The downy God soon clos'd her eyes,
To cheer the drooping maid,
When these fantastic visions rise,
In pleasing forms array'd.

Then Werter's pleasing form was seen,
Amidst a happy throng;
And, with an elegance of mien,
Thus tun'd his love-fraught song.

"Where is my Charlotte, charming fair?"

"To earth, alas, confined!"

"O could she view her Werter here,

"What joy would fill her mind.

"No more the pang of deep distress,

"My bosom now invades;

"But every wish and hope to bless,

"Is in this lovely maid.

"True love here always meets return,

"Nor can be chang'd by fate;

"And those on earth once doom'd to mourn,

"Here find their destin'd mate.

"All sordid motives are destroy'd,

"And ev'ry sensual thought,

"Yet tender sentiments enjoy'd,

"By virtue only caught.

"Purg'd from the dross which clouds the eye,

"On your terrestrial shore,

"I view thy truth and constancy,

"And love my Charlotte more.

"Yes, Charlotte, here my heart's the same!"

"My thoughts improv'd more pure;

"Nor time, nor death, could quench my flame,

"For thee it shall endure.

"Thy

32 WERTER AND CHARLOTTE:

" Thy virgin vows, fraternal mind,

" Unto a parent giv'n,

" To such benevolence inclin'd,

" Must waft thy soul to heav'n.

" Swift fly the hours, speed the time,

" Till thou my love appear,

" That we may meet without a crime,

" In bless'd elysium here.

" When mutual tenderness and joy,

" Our happiness shall crown,

" Raptures, without the least alloy,

" And virtue all our own."

The morning dawn'd, the vision fled,

When waking, Charlotte cried,

" My constant Werter is not dead,

" But does in bills abide."

Thus, my friend, I amuse myself with a fallacious fruitless shadow. Adieu.

LETTER XXXVII.

Sept. 2.

I WILL leave her—I was in doubt, and you determine me. My dear friend, I sincerely thank you. I have resolved to leave her this fortnight; What shall I do? It must be so—she is gone back to town, and is at the house of a relation; Albert is with her, and—but I must—I will go from hence.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

Sept. 3.

MY friend, after last night! I think I can henceforth bear any thing. No! I shall see her no more. Oh sad! why cannot I, with floods of tears express all the passions which rive my heart! I do all in my power to compose myself, but all, all in vain. Like the buoyant cork on the wave, love, ill requited, floats on the mind. I rise, I lie down, I wish for day-light and the post horses—but where can they carry me beyond the reach of myself? Charlotte is at rest; she does not know that she will never see me more. I tore myself away, and had the resolution not to intimate my design, during a conversation which lasted upwards of two hours. Great God, what a trial! Albert promised to lead Charlotte out into the garden immediately after supper. I was upon the terrace, under the thick chesnut-trees, and beheld the setting sun; my eyes for the last time saw him descend beneath this delightful valley. I had often before, upon the same spot, with Charlotte, seen the same glorious sight, and now a final view. I walked up and down this walk so dear to me; a secret sympathy had often attracted and detained me there before I was acquainted with Charlotte; and we were pleased, when early in our friendship we discovered in each other a parity of sentiment, and predilection for this place. I remember to have mentioned to you once before, what an extensive view there is from under this chesnut-tree grove; and described
how

how high copses inclose the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a recess formed by the thickest trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy solitude. I shall never forget the tender melancholy which came over my heart the first time I entered this silent retreat. My mind at that time certainly felt some presage, some secret foreboding, that it would one day be the scene of my happiness and of my misery.

After I had spent some time in the opposite ideas of departing this scene and returning again, I heard them walking up the terrace. I ran to meet them, and shuddering, I took Charlotte's hand and kissed it with transport. Just as we reached the top of the terrace, the moon appeared rising behind a hill covered with trees. We talked on various subjects till we came into the dark end of the grove: Charlotte went in and sat down: Albert sat himself beside her; I seated myself too; but my agitation would not permit me to remain long so: I got up and stood before her, walked about—backwards and forwards, sat down again;—my mind was in a state of violent perturbation. Charlotte made us observe a fine effect of moon-light at the end of the wood, which appeared the more striking and brilliant, from the darkness which surrounded the spot where we stood. You cannot imagine the effect the contrast had on my mind; for a minute the emotions within my breast subsided; like the Indians, I looked beyond the light clouds for the happy country to which I was going. The profound silence of the night, and the solemnity of the scene, was particularly adapted to my situation of mind. We remained
silent

silent for some time, and then Charlotte said, "Whenever I walk by moon-light, I always think of those who were dear to me, and who are now no more; and it brings to my mind death and a future state.—Yes," continued she, with a firm but affecting voice, "we shall still exist hereafter; but, Werter, shall we find one another out? Shall we know one another again? Shall we be conscious of ourselves? Werter, tell me what is your opinion? Have you any presages of these things?" "Charlotte," said I, taking her by the hand, and my eyes suffused with tears, "we shall see one another again here and hereafter." I could speak no more.—My dear friend, should she have put this question to me, when the thoughts of a long and cruel separation filled my heart?

"And those who have been dear to us," she continued, "and who are removed from this scene, do they know that when we are happy, we recall them to our memory, and recollect with tenderness the times which are past?—My mother's shade hovers round me, when in the evening I sit with her children—when I behold them assembled about me, as they used to be about her, I then turn my swimming eyes towards heaven, and wish she could be amongst us, and see that I fulfil the promise which I made to her in her dying moments, to be a mother to her orphan children! Many times I have exclaimed, forgive, dearest mother, forgive me, if I am not to them all that you were!—God knows, I do all that I can, I take care they are properly cloathed and fed, and moreover, they are well educated and beloved! If you could behold our mutual attachment, the harmony

mony that subsists between us, you would return thanks to that Being to whom, dying, you addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness." Oh! my dear friend, if I could but recollect all her words! But shall cold unfeeling characters repeat the expressions of pathetic genius? "My dear Charlotte," said Albert, interrupting her, "you are too much affected: I know these recollections are dear to you, but I beg you will not—" "Oh, Albert," said she, "can you forget?—I am sure you do not; the evenings when we three, while my father was absent, used to sit at our little round table, after the children were gone to bed? Have you forgot how you used to hold a book in your hand, but seldom read a page of it—and who would not have preferred the discourse of that delightful woman to any thing in the world? she was handsome, chearful, placid, and always active. The Almighty knows how often I have prostrated myself before him, and prayed that I might have a portion of her merit." I threw myself at her feet; I seized her hands, and wetted them with my tears; "Charlotte," said I, "Charlotte! the blessings of heaven await upon you, and the spirit of your mother."—"Werter, if you had but known her, she was worthy of your acquaintance." She pressed my hand!—I was motionless; I had never received such flattering praise, and this worthy woman died in the prime of her age; the youngest of her children was but six months old; her illness was but short; she was resigned and calm; her approaching dissolution gave her but little trouble; all her anxiety was about her children, and more particularly the youngest. Poor woman, when she found her end drawing
near,

near, she bade me fetch them; and when they were all around her bed, the little ones, who were not sensible of the nature of their misfortunes, and the great ones who were quite overwhelmed with sorrow, she lifted her feeble hands to heaven, and prayed the Almighty to be a father to them; she then kissed them one after the other, and sent them back, saying to me, "Charlotte, be you their mother." I held down my head; my tears ran fast—I gave her both my hands. "You promise a great deal, my child; a mother's charge, a mother's fondness, and a mother's care, are heavy duties; your tears of affection and gratitude have already convinced me that you felt what was a mother's tenderness. My dear child, fraternal affection is the first duty we owe one another. Be dutiful to your father, and faithful as a good wife, and you will be the comfort of his declining age." She asked for him, but he had retired to give way to sorrow. He felt all that he was to lose, and his heart was ready to burst. "Albert, you remember you was then in the room. She heard somebody move; she asked who it was, and desired you to come to her. With what satisfaction she looked at us; with what composure she said, 'they will be happy; they will be happy with one another when I am gone.' Albert then took her in his arms, and said, 'Yes, Charlotte, we are and shall be happy.' The scene was even too much for the cold phlegmatic Albert;—he was moved;—I was quite out of my senses.

"And such a woman," she went on, "was to leave us, Werter! Almighty God! and must we thus part with every thing we hold dear in the world? Children feel this calamity more eminently

nently than others; they cried and mourned for a long time afterwards, and lamented that black man had carried away their dear mama! Charlotte got up; it roused me, but I still remained sitting, and held her hand between mine. "Let us go," said she, "it is late." She drew away her hand; I held it still closer. "We shall see one another again," said I; "we shall find one another out; though under some other form, we shall know one another. I am going; yes, I am going by my own inclination; but if it was for ever, it would be more than I could bear. Adieu, Charlotte! adieu, Albert! we shall know one another again."—"Yes, to-morrow, I think," she added, smiling."—I felt the words, *to-morrow*, she said. Alas! when she uttered the words, she scarcely knew—she walked down the walk: I stood motionless, and followed her with my eyes; then threw myself on the ground in a strong passion, and wept bitterly: I got up again, and ran to the terrace, and there I could still discern, under the shade of the trees, her white gown waving near the garden gate. I stretched my arms out towards her, and she disappeared*!

* The former translator has, in this letter, eminently done justice to the German original, although there is reason to imagine he never saw it. The dreadful situation of the mind of Werter is finely described, and Charlotte's filial and fraternal virtues are here particularly addressed to the heart. It is to be hoped that this may prove a lesson to others, and teach them to be cautious how they form connections with persons whose sure engagements permits them not to join in the mutual bonds of connubial love. TRANS.

LETTER XXXIX.

Oct. 20.

WE arrived here yesterday. The minister being unwell, will not leave his apartment for a few days—I wish he were not so peevish. Heaven has, I perceive, destined me to severe trials; but my spirits shall not droop. A little levity will enable me to bear it all. Levity! I can scarce help smiling, to think how the word should escape from my pen. However, a little of that levity would render me the happiest of mortals; while others, whose talents are below mediocrity, are parading before me with the utmost satisfaction to themselves, shall I despair of my abilities? Thou beneficent Being, to whom I am indebted for the gifts I possess, why didst thou not deprive me of one half, and bestow in their room, self-complacency and confidence? Patience! patience! all will be better. I own to you, my friend, you were right. Since I have been a spectator of the actions and pursuits of other men, I am become more satisfied with myself. It is certain, that while we make ourselves a universal criterion to judge of every thing we see, our happiness or misery depend on the objects we are conversant with; and nothing, for this reason, is so dangerous as solitude.

The imagination naturally disposed to rise, and warmed by the phantoms of poetry, creates a new set of beings, amidst whom we are the lowest in order. And this is natural—we are so often sensible of our imperfections; and others so frequently
seem

seem to possess those qualities, in which we are defective, that we conceive they also possess those we have ourselves, and thus we create a perfect being, which exists only on our own minds.

But when, in spite of weakness and disappointment, we steadily persevere in the pursuit of one end, we find, that though continually tacking, we make more way than others, though favored by wind and tide; and the judgement we form of ourselves must be true, when our situation, compared with others, is either preferable, or on an equality with theirs.

LETTER XL.

Nov. 10.

MY situation grows tolerable. I am sufficiently employed and greatly amused with the number of actors, and the different characters they perform. I have become acquainted with Count C——, whose character I venerate every day more and more. He is a man of great understanding, and though of superior discernment, he is not on that account cold and reserved in his temper. His conversation evinces a heart full of sensibility. As I waited on him one morning on business, he expressed a friendship for me; for, by the first word he discovered, we understood each other, and that he could converse with me in a manner different from that he made use of to others. I cannot sufficiently honor the openness of his behavior to me. One can scarce receive a
greater

greater pleasure, than to see a great mind thus unbosom itself.

L E T T E R X L I .

Dec. 24.

AS I forefaw, the minister occasions me much vexation. He is the most punctilious fool in the world. He moves step by step, with the minuteness of an old woman—Never satisfied with himself, and therefore it is impossible for others to please him. I like to proceed in business with regularity and dispatch ; and when it is done, that it should be done : but whenever I present him a draught, he is always disposed to return it, with saying, “ it will do,” but look it over again, you may substitute a correcter phrase, or a better word—I wish myself at the devil—no conjunctive particles must be wanting ; and as to inversions, which frequently flow from my pen, he is a declared enemy to them.—If the period does not run exactly in the rule of office, he does not understand a word of it—It is a misfortune to be connected with such a being. The acquaintance of Count C— is my only consolation. He lately expressed his dissatisfaction at the tardiness of the minister. “ Men of his disposition,” says he, “ make themselves, and every body about them unhappy ; but one must submit, as a traveller, who is obliged to toil over a lofty mountain, if the mountain were not in the way, the road would be much smother and commodious ; but
in

in fine, there it is ! and it must be passed." The Count's preference for me, is visible to the old man, who is much hurt at it, and therefore embraces every opportunity of depreciating the Count to me : I naturally take his part, and this makes things worse. Yesterday I perceived that when he aimed a blow at my friend, he also intended it to hit me. " For the common affairs of the world," said he, " the Count is well adapted : he is industrious, and writes with ease ; but like many great geniuses, he is deficient in solid learning." I longed to handle him, for it is to no purpose to reason with such an animal : but however, as that was not practicable, I replied with some heat, that the Count ought to be respected, both for his character and abilities. He is the only man I ever knew, who, in the possession of an extensive genius, which raised him above the common level, retained all his activity in business. This was Algebra to his conception ; and I retired, lest some fresh instance of his stupidity should irritate me too much. You are the author of my slavery ; you forced me to bend my neck to this yoke, and preached activity to me. Activity ! If the man who plants potatoes, and visits the city to sell his corn, is not more active than I am, then will I labor ten years longer at the galley to which I am at present chained. And the disgust and lassitude among these silly people, who affect an unmixed society—the desire of rank ! with what care and circumspection do they watch to gain precedence !—what mean and contemptible passions, and how visible ! There is a woman, for instance, who is perpetually endeavoring to entertain the company with long accounts of her
pedigree

pedigree and estates. Were a stranger to hear, he must naturally think her brain was disordered, by supposing that her small pretensions to rank, or the reputation of enjoying a manor, could operate wonders. But what is ridiculous, the woman is no more than the daughter of a steward in the neighbourhood. I cannot imagine why the human race can so degrade itself.

Indeed, my friend, I every day observe the folly of mankind, in judging of others by themselves; and since I look so often into myself, and find my heart so turbulent, I willingly would leave others to tread in the path they have chosen, provided they suffer me to move in mine. The wretched distinctions between the inhabitants of the same town, give me the most disturbance. I am very sensible that difference of condition is necessary, and of the advantage I derive from it; but I would not make it an obstacle to any pleasure, or shadow of happiness I might enjoy while I remain on the earth. I have shortly become acquainted with a young lady, an amiable creature, who retains much natural freedom amidst people of ceremonious stiffness. We were mutually pleased at the first conversation we had with each other; and when we parted, I requested permission to see her at her own house. This she granted in such a pleasing manner, that I had scarce patience to wait till the appointed time. She is not of this place, but resides here with an old aunt. I was not much pleased with the physiognomy of the aged dame. I paid her much attention—my conversation was principally directed to her; and in about half an hour, I guessed what the niece afterwards acknowledged to me: that
her

her aunt, in her old age, being deficient both in fortune, mental and personal charms, enjoyed no satisfaction, but in running over a long list of her great ancestors; no protection but in her rank, with which she fur rounds herself as a rampart; and no delight, but in contemplating from her window the ignoble croud below. In her youth she is reported to have been handsome; her life has been trifled away, and many a hapless youth has her caprice tormented. In her maturer years, she was forced to accept of an old officer, under whose rigid discipline she endured the rigors of an iron age. Now she is a widow, and would lead a life of perpetual solitude, if the disposition of her niece were not so amiable.

LETTER XLII.

Jan. 8, 1772.

WHAT mortals! their souls are devoted to form, and a whole year is employed in meditating how they may get nearer the upper end of the table by one chair. And don't suppose them to be idle people! on the contrary, they increase their labor, for the attention to these trifles keeps them from necessary business. In a party in sledges on the ice last week, a dispute arose about precedence, and the company immediately broke up. The fools do not see, that place only constitutes not greatness, and that he who enjoys the first place, is rarely the principal actor. How many kings are governed by their ministers, and how many ministers by their secretaries!

aries! and who is in that case the chief? Is it not he who possesses address enough to render the power of the great subservient to his designs?

LETTER XLIII.

Jan. 20.

I CANNOT refrain writing to you, my dear Charlotte, while I am seated here in a little cottage, which has afforded shelter from the violence of a storm. During the whole time, I was in that dreary town, D. amidst strangers, (strangers indeed to my heart!) I never felt my heart impelled to write to you; but the moment I found myself in this solitary confined hut, where hail and snow are beating against the window, you were the first object of my thoughts. On my entrance, your image rushed into my fancy; and the remembrance so tender! so sacred!—Good heaven restore me the moment in which I first beheld you. Were you to see me, my lovely Charlotte, in this vortex of dissipation! my senses are choaked up! my heart is never full; and I am incapable of shedding a tear of tenderness. I am, as it were, at a puppet show, and seeing the little puppets move before me, frequently ask myself, if it be not an optical illusion. I play with them; or rather, am myself played upon by them. I lay hold of my neighbor's hand, and feeling that it is made of wood, shudder and draw mine back again. I have found but one amiable female here, a Miss B. she resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if it is possible for any thing to resemble you.

Ah!

60 WERTER AND CHARLOTTE:

Ah! you will say, "he has acquired the art of making elegant compliments." Indeed there is some truth in the remark. I have lately been exceedingly polite, not being able to be any thing better. I have also a great share of wit; and the women tell me, that nobody knows so well, how to deliver compliments, and *lies* you will say, for they generally accompany each other. I was speaking of Miss B. she has a deal of sensibility, which beams from her fine blue eyes. Her rank rather incommodes her, and gratifies no wishes of her heart. She would gladly retire from the croud; and we frequently amuse ourselves with delineating happiness amid rural scenes. How often does she pay homage to you—and this is not exacted; for she loves you; delights to hear me talk of you. Oh! that I were seated in your parlour, surrounded by your children; and if their noise grew too troublesome to you, I would tell them a story, and attract their silent attention. The sun sets with magnificent splendor; the storm is abated, and I must return to my dungeon. Adieu. Is Albert with you? and what is he to you? Good God that I should ask such a question.

L E T-

LETTER XLIV.

February 17.

I FEAR that I shall not agree long with the minister; the man grows quite unbearable. His manner of transacting business is so ridiculous, that I cannot avoid contradicting him, and doing things in my own manner, which of course can never be right: of this he has lately made a complaint to court. I received a gentle reprimand from the minister, and I was in hourly expectation of my dismissal, when I was honored with a private letter from him, which made me adore the wise, noble, and magnanimous mind that could thus discover my too exquisite sensibility: it exhorted me not totally to extinguish that impetuous disposition which carried me through business with such violence; but so to abate its ardor, that my abilities might always have a fair exertion. This reconciled me to myself for eight days. Tranquillity of mind would be an invaluable treasure, my friend, but it is equally transitory.

LETTER XLV:

February 20.

GOD bless you, my dear friends! May he shower those blessings upon you, which he has denied to me.

Albert! I thank you for having deceived me: I expected to be informed when the nuptials were to be celebrated, and had determined to take Charlotte's picture from the wall, and to bury it among other papers. You are now united, and the portrait is still there. It shall remain there—Why not? I know that I have not injured you in the heart of Charlotte. I have the second place, which I must retain. I should run distracted at the thought of her forgetting me—There is hell in the idea! Farewell, Albert. Farewell, Charlotte.

 LETTER XLVI.
March 15.

A Disagreeable circumstance has happened, which must oblige me to quit this place—I could gnash my teeth with rage!—damnation!—But it is you, and only you who are in fault—to tease and harrafs me into a situation, to which my feelings are not adapted. That you may not, as usual, complain of my chimerical ideas, I will draw up a plain state of the facts, with as much accuracy,

accuracy, as the annalist, who records the transactions of his times.

I have already told thee that Count C. has shewn me particular marks of esteem. I yesterday paid him a visit, not recollecting that it was the day on which all the nobility were to be with him, and that we subalterns could not be admitted. However, I dined with him; and after dinner, we walked in the saloon, where I entered into conversation with the Count and Colonel D.—so passed the time—God knows, I was thinking of nothing! when in came the lady of S—— with her husband, and silly daughter, with her flat breast and small waist, who, in passing, looked at me with a contemptuous sneer. As I detest the whole tribe, I intended to withdraw, and only waited for an opportunity to take my leave of the Count. At this moment Miss B. entered the room: as I never meet her but with pleasure, I remained there, and leaned on the back of her chair, but did not perceive, till some time had elapsed, that she spoke not with her usual frankness to me. Is *she* also like the rest! exclaimed I to myself. I was hurt, and was leaving the room, when a desire of examining farther into the affair stopped me. The rest of the company appeared. There was the Baron F—— in a suit that was worn at the coronation of Francis the First: the Chancellor and his mate, who is old and deaf. The Count of I——, whose Gothic style of dress made a glaring contrast to modern fashions. I spoke to a few of my acquaintance, who, I thought, were devilish laconic, and therefore I paid my attention solely to Miss B. I did not observe that the women were whispering at

the end of the room: that the contagion had reached the men, and that Madam S—— was speaking to the Count—[all this was told me afterwards by Miss B.] At length the Count came up, and took me to the window. “You are acquainted with our absurd customs,” says he. “I perceive the company are dissatisfied at your being here. I would not, on any consideration”—“I beg your Excellency’s pardon,” said I, interrupting him, “I ought to have thought of it before; but I know you will excuse this little inattention; indeed I was going, but my evil genius withheld me,” and, bowing, with a smile, I took my leave. The Count pressed my hand in a manner that expressed every thing: I made the brilliant company a low bow, threw myself into my chaise, and drove to M——. I beheld the setting sun from the hill, and read that beautiful passage in Homer, where Ulysses is received with so much hospitality by the herdsmen.

In the evening I returned to the supper-room. There were only a few people, who had taken up a corner of the table cloth to play at dice—The good-natured A—— came in, and laying down his hat, whispers, “You have met with a disagreeable circumstance—the Count has desired you to quit the assembly.” “May furies seize the assembly,” I replied, “I was glad to breath a little fresh air.” “I am glad you take it in that light; but it vexes me to hear it in every body’s mouth.” It was then only I felt myself hurt. I thought I was at supper the subject of every one’s animadversion, and the idea made my blood boil.

To day I am insulted with pity: my enemies triumph, and say, this is generally the fate of those

those silly people, who, pluming themselves on their abilities, affect to despise form ; with other stuff of the same kind.—I could plunge a poignard into my bosom—Preach as long as you please about fortitude—Who can bear that such despicable scoundrels should have any hold of one. When your railery has no foundation, it may be endured.

LETTER XLVII.

March 16.

EVERY thing seems combined against me. I met Miss B. to day on the parade. As soon as we were somewhat separated from the company, I could not help telling her how I was affected at her change of behavior. "O Werter," said she, with a feeling tone of voice, "how could you, who know my heart, so misconstrue my conduct ? Heaven knows what I felt on seeing you in the ball-room. I foresaw every thing that would happen, and intended several times to tell you. I was certain the S—— and T—— would sooner quit the room, than remain in your company. The Count cannot affront them—and now all the rumor"—"How," exclaimed I, endeavoring to conceal my emotion, (for all that Adelin had told me, rushed into my memory). "What have I already suffered on your account," said the amiable girl, the tears standing in her eyes. I was no longer master of myself, and was ready to throw myself at her feet. "Explain yourself,"

yourself," I cried—tears trickling down her cheeks, which she wiped off, without pretending to conceal them. "You know," said she, "that my aunt was present; and in what an odious light has she viewed this affair. I have been tormented, Werter, all the last evening, and this morning, about my intimacy with you, and heard you abused and vilified, without daring to say scarce any thing in your defence." Every word was like a dagger to my heart. She did not perceive that it would have been a point of humanity to conceal all this from me, but unguardedly added, "What a heap of scurrility will this occasion? How the pitiful wretches will triumph at your distress—That pride and contempt of others, with which they have long reproached you, they will now see humbled." To hear all this spoken, with the voice of the most heartfelt concern, was distraction to my soul. I could have wished that one had, at that instant, upbraided me with my situation, that I might have sacrificed him to my rage and resentment. A hundred times have I seized a knife, with an intention to plunge it into my anguished heart. I have heard of a noble race of horses, who, when they over-heat themselves, will instinctively open a vein with their teeth, in order to breath more freely. I wish like them to open a vein, to gain eternal liberty.

LETTER XLVIII.

March 24.

I HAVE written to court for permission to resign, which I hope shortly to receive; and you will excuse me for not having applied for your consent. I knew all that you could urge for me to stay, and was fully determined on the step—you must acquaint my mother. I cannot keep myself, therefore she must be satisfied if I cannot help her. It certainly will cause her some uneasiness, to see her son stop short in that career, which would have raised him to a privy counsellor, or ambassador, and thus return to my original obscurity. You may argue as long as you please, and muster up all the reason which should have induced me to remain, but I am resolved to go.—Here is the Prince of ———, who is fond of my company; and hearing of my resignation, has given me an invitation to spend the spring with him at his country seat. He has promised that I shall be quite at liberty; and as we coincide in every point but one, I shall venture to accept his invitation.

LET.

LETTER XLIX.

July 19.

I THANK you for your two letters. I did not reply, as I chose not to write till I had obtained leave to resign, being afraid that otherwise my mother would have applied to the minister, and circumvented my intention. However, the business is done, and here is my dismissal. I will not tell you with what reluctance it was granted, nor what the minister wrote to me: it would only renew your lamentations. The hereditary prince has made me a present of twenty-five ducats, accompanied with an expression that affected me almost to tears; my mother, therefore, need not send the money I wrote for.

 LETTER L.
May 5.

I SHALL leave this place to-morrow. As my native place is only six miles out of the road, I will pay a visit to it, and amuse myself with the remembrance of past happiness. I will go in at the gate, through which I accompanied my mother; when, after the death of my father, she quitted this charming spot, to bury herself in your horrid town. Adieu! You shall hear of my expedition.

L E T-

LETTER LI.

May 9.

I HAVE performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity, with all the enthusiasm of a real pilgrim: my feelings were raised beyond my expectations. Near the large elms which stands above a quarter of a league from the town, I stopped the postillion, and ordering him to drive on, got out and walked, that I might enjoy my meditations without interruption—I stood under the elm, which was, in my infancy, the object and end of my walks. How changed! At that period of happy ignorance, I sighed after a world I did not know, where I hoped to meet with every enjoyment my heart felt the want of. Now, my friend, I was returned from that world, and with what? with disappointed hopes and unsuccessful plans. I beheld the mountain that had so often been the object of my wishes. Here have I reclined for an hour together, wishing to lose myself in those woods and vallies, which my fancy painted so delightful; and when the hour of absence expired, with what regret did I leave this favorite spot. I came nearer to the town, and recognized all the little summer-houses I was acquainted with; the new ones did not please me, nor indeed do the alterations which have been made since I was there. I went in at the gate and felt myself quite at home. My dear friend, I shall not enter into a detail of my feelings; for though they were to me delighting, they might appear tedious in the relation. I intended to lodge

lodge in the market-place, opposite our old house. On going there, I observed, that the school-room, where a good old dame taught our children, was changed into a shop. I recollected the tears I had shed, the little anxieties and heart-achs I had suffered in that confinement. Every step excites some new sensations—no pilgrim in the holy land ever met with more vestiges to raise emotions; nor was his soul ever filled with more devotion. I will mention one of the thousand I experienced. Having followed the course of a little brook that leads to a farm, which was once a favorite place, where we boys used to amuse ourselves with making ducks and drakes on the water, I remember my having often stood admiring the water as it flowed, and wondered where it went to. My imagination was exhausted, but the water continued flowing, till my mind was totally lost in invisible space. This, my dear friend, was the ideas of our great ancestors, when Ulysses speaks of the immeasurable ocean, and unlimited earth: is it not more natural and agreeable to our feelings, than now-a-days, that every school boy can repeat after his master that the world is round?—I am now with the prince at his hunting feat. He is a worthy, agreeable man. There is one thing in him that displeases me. He frequently talks of things he has only read or heard of, and place them exactly in the same view in which they have been represented to him. He also values my understanding and talents more than my heart; on which solely I pride myself, which I consider as the source of all my abilities, virtue, happiness, and misery. Every man may acquire my knowledge, but the heart is only mine.

L E T.

LETTER LII.

May 25.

I HAD formed a plan which I did not intend to communicate to you till it was accomplished—as it has failed, I may as well tell you. I have long desired to go into the army. It was principally on this account that I accompanied the prince: he is a General in the service of ——. I opened my design to him yesterday in taking a walk: he disapproved of it, and assigned me reasons, which it would have been madness in me to have opposed.

LETTER LIII.

June 11.

YOU may say what you will, I cannot remain any longer here. The time grows tedious. The prince makes me his companion, notwithstanding I am not at home: our souls are not congenial. He is a man of understanding, but it is a common understanding. His conversation does not yield me more pleasure than if I read a well-written book. I shall stay eight days longer, and then I begin to peregrinate. The best things I have done are some drawings. The prince has a taste for the arts, and would have more, if he were not cramped by scientific jargon, and learned rules. I am frequently out of patience, when I endeavor, with a glowing imagination, to
give

give to art and nature the most delicate touches—he endeavors to improve them by elaborate criticisms.

LETTER LIV.

July 18.

WHITHER I am going, I disclose to thee in confidence. I am obliged to stay here a fortnight longer than I intended. I had made up my mind to visit the mines in —; but 'tis a mere delusion. I only wish to be nearer Charlotte. I smile at the weakness of my heart, and yield to its dictates.

LETTER LV.

July 29.

OH no, 'tis well—'tis all well—Me her husband! Oh thou Great GOD, who gave me being, if thou hadst granted me the happiness, my life should have been one continued prayer. I will not murmur. Forgive these tears. Forgive these vain wishes—She my wife!—to clasp in my arms the most adorable creature under heaven!—My whole frame shudders when I see Albert embrace her.

And why may I not affirm, my dear friend, that she had been happier with me than with Albert?
He

He is not calculated for her. A certain want of sensibility, or sympathy, that does not beat in unison with her heart. Oh, when we have been reading an affecting story, how often has my heart and her's seemed to meet: how often have I seen that nature made us for each other. Alas, my friend, this worthy man loves her with all his soul; and what does not such a love merit? I have been interrupted—my tears are dried up, and my sorrows are somewhat dissipated. Adieu.

LETTER LVI.

August 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate. All mankind are disappointed in their hopes, and deceived in their expectations. I went to see the good woman who lives near the Lime Tree. The eldest boy ran to meet me: he screamed for joy, which brought out the mother, who looked dejected. The first thing she said was, "Dear Sir, my jack is dead." He was the youngest of her boys. I was silent, and she continued, "My husband is returned penniless from Switzerland; and without the assistance of some benevolent friends, he must have begged his way. He had a fever on the road." I was unable to reply: I gave the child something: she begged me to take a few apples, which I accepted, and quitted the place full of grief.

LET.

LETTER LVII.

August 21.

MY sensations change with the rapidity of lightning. A sudden gleam of joy will sometimes start upon my drooping soul; but, alas! 'tis momentary. In my reveries, I cannot frequently help thinking, if Albert were to die! then would—yes, she would—and then I pursue the chimera, till it leads me to the brink of a precipice, from which I start back with horror. When I go out at the gate, through which I drove when I went to the dance; and saw Charlotte—how changed a being am I—yes, all is fled. The world is no longer the same. The heart beats no longer with the same pulsations. If the shade of a departed prince were to visit the palace, which he had built for a beloved son, and were to find it desolate and in ruins, by the incursions of a more powerful neighbor, his sensations would exactly resemble mine.

LETTER LVIII.

Sept. 3.

I Sometimes cannot comprehend why she even dared to love another, while she alone fills my heart—whilst my whole soul is devoted to her—whilst I think only of her, and know nobody in the world but her.

L E T-

LETTER LIX.

Sept. 6.

IT was with the greatest reluctance that I left off the blue frock which I wore, when I first danced with Charlotte: it grew quite shabby. However, I have had another made exactly like it, and also a buff waistcoat and breeches. It has not the same effect on me; but I hope it will in time become equally dear to me†.

LETTER LX.

Sept. 15.

I COULD wish myself at the devil, when I reflect on the number of contemptible wretches, whom the Almighty suffers to exist in the world, without any idea or feeling for what little is really valuable in it. You may recollect the walnut-trees, under which I sat with Charlotte at the vicar's. I ever contemplated them with pleasure. They were an ornament to the parsonage-yard, and their shade was delightful and refreshing. It brought to one's ideas the good pastors who had planted them so many years ago. The school-master often repeated the name of one of them. He was

† It is presumed, that from the publication of this letter, Buff and Blue took the lead in the polite and political circles of the Ton. TRANS.

an excellent man, and his remembrance was ever sacred to me. This same school-master, yesterday, with tears in his eyes, told me they were cut down. Cut down! I was distracted, and could have sacrificed the villain who had struck the first stroke. If two such trees had grown in my court-yard, I should have mourned if one of them had died of old age. I must endure it. However, my dear friend, I have one consolation—How far sensibility will go—The whole village murmurs at it; and I hope the peasants will make the vicar's wife suffer for the mischief she has done. It was her. Our good old incumbent is dead, and the wife of the present is a tall meagre creature, who hates the world, and is hated by it in return. A scold, who affects learning, pretends to search into the canonical books, to assist in promoting the new moral and ritual reformation of the Christian religion, and shrugs up her shoulders at Lavater's enthusiasm. She enjoys but an indifferent state of health, and consequently has little enjoyment here below. Such a being only cut down my walnut-trees.—I cannot brook it. Hear her reason. The leaves falling from them, made the yard damp and dirty. The trees hindered the light; and little boys throwing stones at the nuts, interrupted her profound meditation, when she was comparing Kennicott, Semle, and Michaelis. When I found the whole village, particularly the old people, disconcerted, I enquired why they permitted it. "Oh, Sir," said they, "what can we poor peasants do, when the steward orders?" One circumstance, however, has happened very well, the steward and parson (who for once hoped to reap some advantage from
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the whimsies of his rib) agreed to divide the trees between them. The revenue officer, being acquainted with it, took possession of the trees, and disposed of them to the best bidder. They are still lying here on the ground. Oh that I were a prince, how I would serve the steward, vicar, and revenue officer—But if I were a prince, what should I care for the trees that grew in my dominions.

LETTER LXI.

Oct. 10.

THE sight of her fine dark eyes afford me happiness. What affects me is, Albert does not appear to be so happy as he ought to be—as I should have been—if—but I hate suspensions. Here, however, I cannot express myself otherwise—Gracious God, am I not sufficiently explicit?

LETTER LXII.

Oct. 12.

OSSIAN has taken place of Homer in my heart. Through what a world he leads me, to wander over dreary heaths, surrounded by furious whirlwinds, to discover the ghosts of our ancestors by the pale glimmering of the moon. To hear from the mountains, amid the
roaring

roaring of the waters, their half-stifled complaints issuing from the caves; and the sorrows of the hapless love-lorn maidens, weeping over the mossy tombs of their adored warriors. I meet the venerable bard, wandering over the vallies in search of his ancestors: alas! he finds only their tombs. Then casting a dejected look towards the bright orb of the evening, as she gradually sinks beneath the rolling waves, the remembrance of past times occur to the mind of the hero—when a ray of danger lighted fire in his soul—and the moon shone on his bark, laden with the victorious spoils of his enemies. I read the deep marks of sorrow imprinted on his brow: thus, when I see his drooping glory bending to the grave—when I behold him weeping thus over the remains of his departed ancestors—and looking on the cold earth, which is shortly to cover him—then he cries out, “The stranger will come: he will come, who has beheld my beauty, and will exclaim, where is the illustrious son of Fingal: he will wander over my tomb, and seek me in vain.” At that instant, my friend, I could, like a true and noble knight, unsheath my sword, and rescue my prince from the tedious langor of life; afterwards, by putting a period to my own existence, follow the demi-god whom I had set at liberty.

LETTER LXIII.

Oct. 19.

ALAS, this void—this terrible void, which I feel in my heart—Frequently I imagine, if I could but once press her to my bosom, my felicity would be effected.

LETTER LXIV.

Oct. 26.

I AM more and more persuaded, my dear friend, that the existence of a single being is of very little consequence. A female friend of Charlotte's came just now to pay her a visit. I retired into an inner room, and took up a book; but not being disposed to read, I therefore write to you. I overheard them talking over the little news of the town—that one is married; that another is ill, very ill indeed. She has a dry cough—frequent faintings: there is no hope of her recovery, says one. N—— is also very ill, says Charlotte. He swells already, replies the other. My imagination lead to their chambers, where I see them struggling with the last pangs, in all the agonies of pain and horror; and these good ladies are speaking of it with as much indifference, as if they mentioned the death of a stranger. When I look round the room, in which I am sitting, and see Charlotte's apparel around me—here are her ear-rings

ear-rings—there Albert's papers—and all the things so familiar to me ; even this very ink-stand. I think what I am to this family—every thing. My friends esteem me, and are made happy by me ; and my heart tells me, I could scarce live without them : yet, were I now to leave this circle, how long would they feel the void, which the loss of me would occasion. How long ?—So frail is man ! that where he most feels his own existence ; where his presence is most dear ; even there the memory of him will vanish ; and, alas, how soon.

LETTER LXV.

Oct. 27.

I COULD tear out my heart, and dash my brains against the ground, when I think how incommunicative men are to each other. I cannot derive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleasure, that I do not myself possess ; and with a heart glowing with rapture, I am not capable of diffusing happiness to others, in whom the same energy is not inherent.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

Oct. 30.

A Thousand times have I been on the point of folding the lovely angel in my arms. It is distraction to behold so much sweetness and beauty continually passing before one's eyes; without daring to touch it. To touch is natural—children touch what they love—and I!

LETTER LXVII.

Nov. 9.

HEAVEN knows, when I have lain down on my bed, I have often wished to wake no more. In the morning I arise, behold the bright orb of day, and am unhappy. Oh! that I were hipped! that I could impute my sadness to a clouded atmosphere, or an unsuccessful undertaking—my sufferings would grow somewhat tolerable; but, alas! I feel too sensibly that the source of my grief is in myself. This bosom, formerly the seat of delight, is now the seat of misery—am I not the same man, who formerly knew nothing but exquisite sensations, who, at every step, saw paradise before him, whose expanded heart was full of benevolence to all the world. But this heart is now torped—quite dead to all sentiment—my eyes are dry, and my senses no longer moistened by the tears of sensibility, daily wither, and exhaust my brain. My afflictions are many—I am
deprived

deprived of my only consolation—that inspiring power which created worlds around me is now no more! I contemplate the distant mountain from my window, and behold the rising sun, immersing from the clouds, illuminate the gladdened plains with his rays! I see the meandering streams flowing between the willows, stripped of their leaves. But all the magnificent beauties of nature cannot elevate my dejected soul, nor raise one lively sensation in my breast—I am totally inanimate. On my knees I have implored heaven for tears, as the countryman prays for rain to moisten his parched corn. But 'tis in vain; the Almighty does not grant rain or sun-shine to importunities—Why were those times so happy, the memory of which so torments me? When I waited the blessings of the Great Creator of all things with patience, and accepted them with a heart filled with gratitude.

L E T T E R L X V I I I .

Nov. 8.

SHE has reproved my excesses; and with what sweetness! when my extravagance has led me from a single glass of wine, to drink a bottle. “Don’t do it,” said she, “think of Charlotte.” “Think of you! it is not necessary to tell me that. I cannot *think* of you, your image is perpetually in my mind. I was this very morning sitting in the place where you stopped the last time.” She immediately turned the conversation
to

to another subject. My dear friend, I am no longer myself; this amiable dear girl makes me just what she thinks proper.

LETTER LXIX.

Nov. 11.

WHEN will this sad waking dream of life be over? and is there no reversion in the fate of things for those whose love is hopeless? Last night I fell asleep in the fields, and I dreamed that Charlotte was dead, and that she appeared to me, to assure me she had not forgot our former attachment. I cannot think we shall be miserable hereafter. Whatever may be our future condition I know not; but of this I am certain, that unless I share a greater degree of strength, than is the common lot of human nature, I must, at last, drop under the accumulated load of sorrow, which each day encreases on my devoted head. Oh, my dear friend, shall I ever be happy? What will become of me? doomed to love the wife of my friend, and yet my friendship to remain sincere. When I have been thinking of her for some time, I often start, and projecting my arms forward, as if to embrace her, am woefully disappointed, and find I have been attempting to grasp a shadow. Thus, my dear friend, I fall a prey to the illusions of my own imaginations.

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LETTER LXX.

Nov. 15.

I AM obliged to you, my good friend, for interesting yourself so warmly in what relates to me, for your well-meaning advice. But pray make yourself easy on my account. Leave me to my sorrows; I have fortitude enough to surmount them. I revere our religion—I am persuaded, that imparts vigor to the enfeebled, and consolation to the afflicted: and yet, has it this effect on all alike? If you consider mankind with attention, you will find, that there are thousands who never felt it, whether preached to them or not. Doth not Christ say, that those whom God had given him, would be about him? Suppose I should not be in the number. I beg of you not to put a false construction on my words, nor to laugh at my weakness. I place an entire confidence in you, otherwise I should not have said any thing on a subject of which we must all remain equally ignorant. What is the lot of man, but just to fill up the measure of his sorrows, and drink up the nauseous draught. And if the gall was too bitter for the Saviour of mankind, why should I assume a ridiculous pride, and declare my cup is sweet? In that awful moment, when my soul is suspended between existence and annihilation, should I blush to tremble? When dissolution appears like a flash of lightning in the dark abyss of futurity; when every thing sinks around me, and the world vanishes away, is not this the voice of a creature groaning under accumulated

mulated miseries, attempting in vain to escape from destruction. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Should I blush to adopt this expression, when it was used by him who spreadeth the heavens like a garment.

LETTER LXXI.

Nov. 21.

SHE does not perceive—alas! she feels not that she is preparing a poison which will be fatal to us both. I eagerly empty the cup she replenishes for my destruction. What are the tender looks she often—not often neither—but sometimes, directs to me? That affability with which she listens to sentiments that sometimes escape me? That sweet softness of her countenance, which shews how much she sympathises in my sufferings? Yesterday, when I was going away, she gave me her hand, and said, "Adieu! my dear Werter." It was the first time she ever called me so, and the sound pierced my whole frame. I have repeated it an hundred times; and when I retired to my pillow, I said to myself, good night, my dear Werter—recollecting myself, I could not help smiling.

LETTER LXXII.

Nov. 24.

SHE is conscious of what I feel. To-day her looks quite overwhelmed me—I found her alone—I was silent, and she looked stedfastly at me. The charms of beauty, and fire of genius were vanished; but there was to me, an hundred times more interesting, a softness in her countenance, which indicated the tenderest concern. Why dared I not prostrate myself at her feet? Why did I not imprint a thousand kisses on her beauteous neck?—She had recourse to her harpsichord, and sung to it in a low sweet voice. Never did her lips appear half so lovely—they seemed to open just to receive the soft tones of the instrument, and to vibrate them with increased harmony. Who can describe my sensations? I was soon overcome, and bending down, pronounced this vow: “Beauteous lips, which heavenly spirits protect, never will I violate your purity.” And yet, my friend, I wish—Oh! ’tis like a partition before my soul—I could wish to taste this bliss, and then die to expiate my crimes—my crimes!

L E T-

LETTER LXXIII.

Nov. 30.

IT is over—my fate is decided—I see it. Every day I meet with something to distract me. To-day again—Oh, fate! Oh, man! Not being able to eat, I went about dinner time to the river's side. The day was gloomy—a cold damp wind blew from the mountains, and black clouds overspread the plains. At some distance I saw a man in a shabby green coat: he was roaming among the rocks, and appeared to be looking for plants. When I came up to him, disturbed by the rustling I made, he turned round, and I beheld a countenance remarkably interesting, where a settled melancholy was predominant. His black hair hung gracefully over his shoulders. As his appearance indicated him to be of the lower class, I thought I should please him by taking notice of him, therefore asked him what he was looking for. “I am looking for flowers,” replied he, “and can find none.” “This is not the season for them,” said I. “There are so many sorts of flowers,” said he, “I have roses in my garden of two or three different sorts: my father gave me one; they grow like weeds: I have looked for some of them these two days, and cannot find them: there are flowers above these too, yellow, blue, and red, and that centaurs, which grow in such fine clusters, I can get none of them.” “What do you intend to do with them, friend,” said I. (His face was covered with an uncommon smile) “If you will not betray me,” says he, laying his

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finger

finger on his mouth, "I will tell you. I have promised my sweet-heart a nosegay." "That is well," replied I. "Oh," says he, "she has a great many things—she is rich." "And yet," said I, interrupting him, "she is fond of your nosegays." "Oh," continued he, "she possesses jewels and a crown." "What's her name?" "If the States General would but pay me, I should be quite another man. There was a time when all went well with me. But 'tis over. I am now"—an eye lifted toward heaven expressed the remainder. "You were happy once," said I. "Ah," replied he, "I would I were so again. I was once so gay, so lively, so contented"—"Henry," cried an old woman who came that way, "where have you got to, Henry; I have been looking for you every where: come to dinner." "Is that your son?" said I to her. "Yes, my unhappy son!" returned she. "The Almighty has severely afflicted me." "How long has he been in this melancholy situation?" "He has been as calm as he is at present, for about six months. Heaven be praised that he is so far recovered: he was quite raving for a whole year; we were obliged to have him chained in a mad-house. Now, he is not troublesome to anybody: he talks only about kings and queens. He was a good young man, and helped to support me: he suddenly grew melancholy, was seized with a fever, at last with raving madness, and now as you see—if I was to enumerate every circumstance to you"—I interrupted the course of her narration, by asking her, "What times he meant, when he boasted of enjoying so much felicity." "Poor creature," said she, with a smile of pity, "he means the time he
was

was shut up in a mad-house: he is continually regretting it—'twas when he was absolutely raving." I was struck with horror: I put a piece of money into her hand, and went away.

"Thou wast happy," exclaimed I, as I walked precipitately towards the town; "thou wast so gay, so lively, so contented." Gracious God, is this the lot of man; is he happy only before he attains his reason, and after that he is deprived of it? Poor unhappy mortal—yet I envy thy lot, and the disorder under which thou languishes. Even in the winter, thou goest full of hope to pluck flowers for thy mistress; mourns at not finding any, and art at a loss for the reason. I wander without hope, without design, and return as I came. You regret what a great man you would be, if the States General would but pay you. Happy art thou that can ascribe thy sufferings to an earthly power. Thou dost not feel that thy miseries are in thy distracted heart; in thy disordered brain, from which no power on earth can relieve thee.

May their death be miserable, who ridicules the sick man, who travels to distant waters only to accumulate disease, and make his death more painful. Who can exult over the drooping heart, that for the sake of a conscientious vow, and to alleviate the sufferings of his soul, can take a pilgrimage to the holy land? Every step he takes on unbeaten paths, is a balm to his mind, and each night takes a load from his heart. Dare you call this declamation, you who lift yourselves on stilts to make oratorical rhapsodies? Oh God, who beholdest my tears; thou hast afflicted us with a sufficient stock of misery; wilt thou also give us

brethren to rob us of all the confidence that we place in thee? The invigorating vine and healing root come from thy hand, and teach us to believe that every thing thou hast bestowed on man, is pregnant with health, and relief to his dejected soul. Father, whom I know not—thou who wert wont to cheer my soul, but now concealest thyself from me—call on me—be silent no longer. Thy silence will not delay the soul which pants after thee. No father would be wrathful against his son, if he returned unexpectedly to him, and hung on his neck, and cried, “Pardon me, father, for coming back before the appointed time.” The world is every where the same—labor and pain—misery and pleasure—all are alike to me—I can find no happiness but in thy presence; and there only will I enjoy it. Would’st thou, celestial parent, expel this child from thy presence?

LETTER LXXIV.

Dec. 1.

MY dear William, the man I described to you in my last so enviable in his misfortunes, was secretary to Charlotte’s father. He conceived an unhappy passion for her, which he concealed and cherished—at last he was discovered, and dismissed from his service, and fell into the situation in which I saw him. Imagine what an impression these few words made upon me—Albert repeated them

them with as much calm indifference, as perhaps you will read them.

LETTER LXXV.

Dec. 4.

I SEE 'tis all over with me—I can bear it no longer—To-day I was seated by her side—she was playing some favorite airs upon her harpsichord—and with such expression—oh! 'tis impossible to describe it—Her little sister was dressing her doll upon my knee—tears came into my eyes—I leaned down, and her wedding ring started into my sight—my tears flowed—she immediately began to play that enchanting air, that has so often soothed my distracted soul—it excited the remembrance of the times that are past—the vexations, sufferings and disappointments I have felt—I was overwhelmed—I walked hastily up and down the room—my heart trembling all the while. At length going up to her, I exclaimed, “for heaven’s sake leave playing.” She desisted, and looking earnestly at me, said, with a smile, “Wetter, you are not well; your most favorite food disgusts you. Go and endeavor to compose yourself.” I forced myself from her—Gracious God, thou seest my tortures, and will put a period to them.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

Dec. 6.

HOW her image follows me! waking or sleeping she is perpetually before me—when I close my eyes, then in my brain where all my nerves are united, are her fine black eyes—here—but I cannot express it to thee. If I shut my eyes—her's are immediately before me like a sea—a precipice, and occupy all my senses. What is man—that boasted demi-god—He wants the faculties that are most necessary to him—and whether he swims in pleasure, or sinks in sorrow, he is obliged to desist; and whilst he is grasping at infinity, finds he must return to his original cold existence.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

Dec. 8.

MY dear friend—I am in the situation of those wretches, who, as we are told, were formerly possessed by devils—I am often violently agitated—it is not agony—it is not passion—it is an inward rage that seems to tear my bosom and choak me—I weep—wretch that I am—and roam about at midnight amid the dreary scenes, which this tempestuous season exhibits. Last night was I thus impelled to go out—I had heard in the evening that the river and brooks were

were overflowed, and that my favorite vale was under water. 'Twas past eleven when I sallied out—a dreadful scene—the moon glimmered faintly from behind the clouds—I stood near a precipice, the impetuous water rolled rapidly over the fields and meadows, and beat furiously against the bushes; the valley resembled an ocean, tossed by violent winds. The clouds passed away, and the moon appeared with an increased splendor—The waters rolled with a terrible sublimity—Shuddering, I rushed with open arms, towards the precipice—I hesitated—I sighed, and lost myself in the pleasing idea of burying all my ills, all my torments in that abyss, and rolling among the billows—Oh that my feet were not chained to the vile earth!—I might have finished my woes!—But my hour is not yet come—I feel it—With what extacy could I have exchanged my nature, to be incorporated with the storms, to tear the atmosphere, and disturb the deep—May not I one day be released from this prison, and taste this bliss?

How mournfully did I cast my eyes towards the place, where I had often sat under a willow with Charlotte after a summer's walk—that was likewise under water, and I could scarce recognize the willow. Alas! I then thought of the hunting-lodge, and all the adjacent fields, the walks, the green recess; how might they be torn by the violence of the storm. The remembrance of times for ever gone, entered my heart. Thus to the sleeping captive, dreams recall to his mind what he is deprived of—I stopped—I will not reproach myself, I have courage to die—I should have—at present I am like a woman, who, by
picking

picking up a few dry sticks, and begging from door to door, endeavor to prolong, for a short time, an enfeebled and wretched existence.

LETTER LXXVII.

Dec. 17.

I Know not the meaning of it, but I am seized with horror—Is not my love for her of the chastest, the purest and most sacred nature?—Have I ever indulged a criminal wish?—I will make no vows—and now a dream—Oh how truly did those feel, who ascribed contending passions to power foreign to us. Last night (I tremble to tell you) did I hold the divine creature in my arms, press her to my bosom, and imprint a thousand kisses on her lips—Her eyes beamed with tenderness—in mine equal extacy. Gracious GOD! is it criminal to say, that I still feel a transport, when I recall this moment to my imagination? Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte, 'tis all over; my senses are disordered: these eight days I have not been myself; all places are alike indifferent—I am nowhere at peace—my eyes are full—I have nothing to wish—nothing to languish after—'twere better to depart.

The

The Editor to the Reader.

THAT I may give a connected history of the last days of Werter, I find myself obliged to interrupt the continuation of his letters by a narrative, the materials of which have been furnished me by Charlotte, Albert, his own servant, and other witnesses.

The passion of Werter had gradually diminished the harmony between Charlotte and her husband, who loved her with tenderness, though not with violence sufficient to take off his attention from business. Indeed he would not own himself there was this difference between the days of courtship and marriage ; but he felt an inward dissatisfaction at the marked attentions of Werter to his wife, which was an infringement of his privilege, and conveyed, at the same time, a tacit reproach. This idea increased the disgust he conceived for a business which was hourly multiplying ; very difficult, and but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on the mind of Werter, had extinguished the fire of his genius—he had lost all his veracity and lively perceptions—in company he was flat and moping. Charlotte was also affected, and fell into a sort of melancholy, which Albert ascribed to a growing passion for her lover ; and Werter, to the change which was visible in her husband's behavior to her. This want of confidence in the two friends, rendered their society irksome to each other. Albert left the room, when Werter was with his wife, and Werter, who discovered it, after

after several ineffectual efforts to desist, seized those opportunities to see her, when he knew Albert was engaged. This created new disgust. At last Albert dryly told his wife, that were it only for the sake of appearance, she should not so frequently admit the visits of Werter. About the same time, the unhappy young man had determined to quit this world—It had long been his favorite idea, and particularly since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte—yet he was resolved it should not be a rash precipitate step—He wished to do it on the firmest conviction, and with the calmness of a man who knows what he is about. His doubts and struggles may be seen from the following fragment, which was found, without any date, among his papers, and appears to be the beginning of a letter to her friend.

“HER presence, her fate, the interest she discovers for mine, still draw tears from my withered brain—One draws the curtain, and passes to the other side—Why this delay, and all this trembling? 'Tis because we are ignorant of what's behind—'tis because there is no returning—and, we imagine, 'tis all darkness and confusion—where there is no certainty.”

His mortification, when he was with the ambassador, was never erased from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which was but seldom, it was easily to be seen that he conceived his honor was irrecoverably wounded. This gave him a disgust to all political business; he, therefore, gave himself entirely up to that singular mode of thinking, which appears in his letters; and to the violence of his passion, which consumed all his remaining

maining vigor. The perpetual sameness and sadness of his intercourse, with the most amiable of women, which disturbed her peace—and the seeing his life pass away without end or design, drove him, at length, to the dreadful resolution of putting an end to his existence.

LETTER LXXIX.

I Thank thee, William, for thy proposal—yes, we must part. However, I do not entirely approve of your scheme of coming into your neighbourhood: at least I should like to make a tour in my way, particularly as one may expect a frost and good roads. I am very glad you intend to fetch me. I only desire you to postpone your journey fourteen days, and expect another letter from me—Nothing should be plucked before it is ripe, and fourteen days make a great difference. Tell my mother to pray for me, and pardon all the uneasiness I have occasioned her. It was ever my lot to give pain to those whom I ought to have gladdened. Adieu, my best of friends: may you enjoy all the blessings of heaven. Farewell.

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The Sunday preceding Christmas-day, he called in the evening on Charlotte, and found her alone. She was busy in preparing some play things as a Christmas present for her little sisters. He spoke of the pleasure the children would have, and of that age in which the opening of a door, and the unexpected appearance of a desert, with all its embellishments, caused such transports. "You shall have a present too if you behave well," said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a smile. "What do you mean by behaving well, my dear Charlotte: how am I to behave," said Werter. "Thursday evening," says she, is Christmas eve; the children and my father will likewise be here: you will come too, but not before"—Werter started—"Nay," continued she, "it must be so; we cannot go on as we have done any longer." He turned his eyes from her, and walked furiously across the room, repeating to himself, "We cannot go on as we have done any longer." Charlotte, who felt the dreadful situation in which these words had thrown him, endeavored, by asking him several questions on indifferent subjects, to divert his attention, but in vain. "No, Charlotte," he cried, "I will see you no more." "Why not?" says she, "you can; you shall see me again: but pray be a little calm. Oh, why are you torn with such violence of passion, for any thing that is dear to you. I beg of you," continued she, taking hold of his hand, "calm yourself: consider with what a variety of pleasures your fine understanding, your genius, and talents, may yet furnish you." He then burst out in the words of Ossian, "My youth is like the dream of the hunter on the hill of Heath. He sleeps

sleeps in the mild beam of the sun ; but he awakes amidst a storm : the red lightning flies round, and the trees shake their heads to the wind. He remembers, with joy, the pleasant dreams of his rest ! When shall"—Charlotte then interrupted him, and went on, " Be yourself—conquer your attachment for me, who can only pity you"—He knit his brows, and looked angrily at her—She still held his hands—" Only a moment's patience, Werter. Are you not sensible that you are deceiving yourself, in thus promoting your own destruction ? Why me in particular ? only me, who am another's ! I fear it is only the impossibility of possessing me, that renders the desire of it so violent."—He withdrew his hand, and looked at her with a wild and furious aspect—" Did Albert," said he, " furnish you with this sentiment ? 'Tis a very profound one." "'Tis obvious to every one," replied she : " and is then no woman in the world but me who can gratify the wishes of your heart ? Get the better of yourself, and look out for such a one : I am confident she is to be found. I have long been under some anxiety for you, on account of the small circle to which you have confined yourself—A journey would dissipate you—Endeavor to find an object worthy of your passion—You will certainly succeed—Then return, and let us together enjoy the sweets of an uninterrupted friendship." " That speech," said he, " my dear Charlotte, ought to be printed for the perusal of teachers. Allow me peace but a little longer, and all will be well." " Only, Werter, don't come before Christmas eve." He was going to reply, when Albert entered the room. They coolly wished each other a good evening, and

and with an embarrassed air, walked up and down the room. They began to discourse on unconnected subjects; and Albert asking his wife about some trifling commissions, which not being fulfilled, made use of some harsh expressions to her, which pierced Werter to the very soul. He was desirous of going, but could not move. In this situation he lounged till eight, uneasiness of temper and acrimony continually increasing, till the cloth was laid, when he took leave, Albert coolly asking him whether he would not stay supper.

Werter returned home, took the candle from his servant, and went up to his chamber alone. He was heard to sob aloud, and to talk very violently to himself, and to walk hastily up and down the room. At length he threw himself on the bed in his cloaths, where he remained till about eleven o'clock, when the servant ventured to go and ask him whether he would not have his boots pulled off. This being done, he ordered the servant not to come into his apartment the next morning, till he rang for him. Early in the morning of the twenty-first day of December, he wrote the following letter to Charlotte, which, after his death, was found sealed on his desk. I shall give it in fragments; in which, from several circumstances, it appears to have been written:

“Charlotte! I am resolved to die—This I tell you coolly and deliberately on the morning of that day on which you will see me for the last time. Ere you read this, the grave will have put a period to all the miseries of the wretched Werter, who, to his last moments, felt no other happiness than
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in conversing with you. I have passed a dreadful night; or rather, let me deem it a propitious night, that has fixed my wavering resolution—I will die.—When I forced myself from you yesterday, my senses were in the greatest tumult—my heart was oppressed—and a cold damp seemed to cover my wretched existence—I could scarcely get to my apartment—I fell on my knees—Heaven, for the last time, granted me the consolation of shedding tears—a thousand ideas—a thousand different schemes occurred to my distracted imagination. This, at last, took possession of me, and is rooted in my heart, I will die. It is not despair: it is a certainty that I have filled up the measure of my woes, and that I must sacrifice myself to thy peace—yes, Charlotte, to thy peace—why should I conceal it? One of us three must depart—it shall be Werter. Oh, my dear Charlotte, this breast, governed by rage and fury, has often indulged the idea of murdering Albert—you—myself—If ever the serenity of a summer's evening should tempt you to climb to the top of that lofty mountain, remember, how often you have seen me come up the valley: then turn your eyes to the church-yard, which contains my grave; and, by the beams of the setting sun, see how the evening breezes wave the high grass which grows over my head. I was calm when I began to write; but the recollection of these scenes cause me to weep like an infant.”

About ten o'clock in the morning, Werter called his servant; and whilst he was dressing, told him he should take his departure in a few days; he, therefore, was ordered to pack up his cloaths, to call in his bills, to get in some books he had lent,
and

and to give two months pay to some poor people, who had been weekly pensioners of his. He breakfasted in his apartment, and afterwards rode to pay a visit to the steward. He walked pensively about the garden, and appeared as if he wished to heap upon himself all the unhappy thoughts which he had lately indulged. The children did not let him long be quiet, they ran after him, and clinging around him, told him, that when to-morrow, to-morrow, and the next day, were over, they were to have their Christmas gift from Charlotte, and related all the wonderful things which their little imaginations had formed an idea of.—“To-morrow,” cried he, “and to-morrow, and the next day over,”—and embraced them tenderly. He was going to leave them, when the youngest stopped him, to whisper in his ear, that his brother had written very fine compliments on the new year—very fine indeed. There was one for Papa; one for Albert; one for Charlotte; and one for Mr. Werter too. They were all to be presented early in the morning on new-year’s day. This last stroke quite overwhelmed him: he gave each of them something, mounted his horse, and leaving his compliments for their papa, left them with tears in his eyes.

About five o’clock he returned home, ordered his servant to keep up the fire, to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and his cloaths at the top. It appears that he then wrote the following fragment of his last letter to Charlotte.

“You do not expect me—You think I shall obey you, and not see you ’before Christmas eve—Oh, Charlotte—to-day or never! On Christmas

mas eve thou wilt hold this paper in thy hand, and trembling, bedew it with thy tears—I will—I must—and how happy it is for me that I am resolute.”

At half past six he went to Albert's, and found Charlotte alone, who was much distressed at seeing him. She had in the course of conversation, told her husband, that Werter would not be there before Christmas eve. In consequence of this, he had ordered his horse to be saddled, and told her he was going to see a steward in the neighbourhood, with whom he had some business. Charlotte knew he had delayed this visit a long while, which was to keep him a whole night from home. She saw his suspicions, and was hurt.

She was sitting alone, and full of sorrow—She took a retrospective view of her conduct—she was conscious of her innocence—she loved her husband, with whom she saw nothing but a prospect of misery, instead of the happiness she expected—she thought of Werter—she blamed, but could not hate him—a secret impulse had attached her to him from their earliest acquaintance; and now, after being in so many different situations together, the impression was stamped indelibly upon her heart. Her oppressed bosom was at length relieved by a shower of tears, and she fell into a soft melancholy, in which she was quite wrapt, when, to her utmost astonishment, she heard Werter enquiring for her below. It was too late to deny herself, and she had scarce recovered from her confusion, when he entered her apartment. “You have not kept your word,” said she. “I promised nothing,” he answered. “You should, at least, have complied with my request:

request: it was necessary for our mutual peace," replied she. As she spoke these words, she determined to send for some of her female friends, that they might be witnesses to the conversation; and as he would deem himself obliged to see them home, he would go away in good time. He had brought some of her books back. She enquired after some others, and endeavored to introduce indifferent topics, till the arrival of her friends, when her maid returned, with a message from one of them, that she was engaged with company; and, from the other, that she was prevented by the rain.

This, for some moments disconcerted her, but the consciousness of her innocence restored her to herself. She bade defiance to Albert's suspicions; and the purity of her heart gave her courage, so that she did not call her maid into the room, as she first intended; but after playing a few tunes on the harpsichord, to recover her spirits, and compose herself, she sat down with Werter upon the sofa. "Have you nothing to read," said she. He answered, "No." "Then open that drawer, and you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian—I have not yet read it, as I hoped to hear you read it yourself; but you have been fit for nothing lately." He smiled, with his eyes full of tears, took out the manuscript, and began to read,

"Star of the descending night! fair is thy light
in the west! thou liftest thy unshorn head from
thy cloud: thy steps are stately on thy hill.
What dost thou behold in the plain? The stormy
winds are laid. The murmur of the torrent
comes from afar. Roaring waves climb the dis-
tant

tant rock. The flies of evening are on their feeble wings, and the hum of their course is on the field. What doest thou behold, fair light? But thou dost smile and depart. The waves come with joy around thee, and bathe thy lovely hair. Farewell thou silent beam!—Let the light of Ossian's soul arise.

“And it does arise in its strength! I behold my departed friends. Their gathering is on Lora, as in the days that are past.—Fingal comes like a watry column of mist; his heroes are around. And see the bards of the song, gray-haired Ullin; stately Ryno; Alpin, with the tuneful voice, and the soft complaint of Minona!—How are ye changed, my friends, since the days of Selma's feast! when we contended, like the gales of the spring, that, flying over the hill, by turns bend the feebly-whistling grass.

“Minona then came forth in her beauty; with down-cast look and tearful eye; her hair flew slowly on the blast that rushed unfrequent from the hill.—The souls of the heroes were sad when she raised the tuneful voice; for often had they seen the grave of Salgar, and the dark dwelling of white-bosomed Colma. Colma left alone on the hill, with all her voice of music! Salgar promised to come; but the night descended round.—Hear the voice of Colma, when she sat alone on the hill!

COLMA.

“It is night;—I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent shrieks down the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds.

“Rise,

"Rise, moon! from behind thy clouds; stars of the night appear! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the toil of the chase! his bow near him, uninteresting; his dogs panting around him. But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar; nor can I hear the voice of my love.

"Why delays my Salgar, why the son of the hill his promise? Here is the rock, and the tree; and here the roaring stream. Thou didst promise with night to be here. Ah! whither is my Salgar gone? With thee I would fly, my father; with thee, my brother of pride. Our race have long been foes; but we are not foes, O Salgar!

"Cease a little while, O wind! stream, be thou silent a while! let my voice be heard over the heath: let my wanderer hear me. Salgar! it is I who call. Here is the tree, and the rock. Salgar, my love! I am here. Why delayest thou thy coming?

"Lo! the moon appeareth. The flood is bright in the vale. The rocks are grey on the face of the hill. But I see him not on the brow; his dogs before him tell not that he is coming. Here I must sit alone.

"But who are these that lie beyond me on the heath? Are they my love and my brother?—Speak to me, O my friends; they answer not. My soul is tormented with fears—Ah! they are dead. Their swords are red from the fight. O my brother! my brother! why hast thou slain my Salgar! why, O Salgar! hast thou slain my brother? Dear were ye both to me! what shall I say in your praise? Thou wert fair on the hill among thousands; he was terrible in fight. Speak to me;

me ; hear my voice, sons of my love ! But alas ! they are silent ; silent for ever ! Cold are their breasts of clay !

“ Oh ! from the rock of the hill : from the top of the windy mountain, speak ye ghosts of the dead ! speak, I will not be afraid.—Whither are ye gone to rest ? In what cave of the hill shall I find you ? No feeble voice is on the wind : no answer half-drowned in the storms of the hill.

“ I sit in my grief. I wait for morning in my tears. Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead ; but close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream : why should I stay behind ? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill ; when the wind is on the heath ; my ghost shall stand in the wind, and mourn the death of my friends. The hunter shall hear from his booth. He shall fear but love my voice. For sweet shall my voice be for my friends ; for pleasant were they both to me.

“ Such was thy song, Minona softly-blushing maid of Torman. Our tears descended for Colma, and our souls were sad.—Ullin came with the harp, and gave the song of Alpin.—The voice of Alpin was pleasant : the soul of Ryno was a beam of fire. But they had rested in the narrow house : and their voice was not heard in Selma.—Ullin had returned one day from the chace, before the heroes fell. He heard their strife on the hill ; their song was soft but sad. They mourned the fall of Morar, first of mortal men. His soul was like the soul of Fingal ; his sword like the sword of Oscar.—But he fell, and his father mourned : his sister’s eyes were full of tears.

tears.—Minona's eyes were full of tears, the sister of car-borne Morar. She retired from the song of Ullin, like the moon in the west, when she foresees the shower, and hides her fair head in a cloud.—I touched the harp, with Ullin; the song of mourning rose.

RYNO

“The wind and the rain are over: calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill. Sweet are thy murmurings, O stream! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead. Bent is his head of age, and red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, why alone on the silent hill? why complainest thou, as a blast in the wood; as a wave on the lonely shore?”

ALPIN

“My tears, O Ryno! are for the dead; my voice, for the inhabitants of the grave. Tall thou art on the hill; fair among the sons of the plain. But thou shalt fall like Morar; and the mourner shall sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more; thy bow shall lie in the hall, unstrung.

“Thou wert swift, O Morar! as a roe on the hill; terrible as a meteor of fire. Thy wrath was as the storm. Thy sword in battle, as lightning in the field. Thy voice was like a stream after rain; like thunder on distant hills. Many fell by thy arm; they were consumed in the flames of thy wrath.

“But when thou didst return from war, how peaceful was thy brow! Thy face was like the sun

sun after rain; like the moon in the silence of night; calm as the breast of the lake when the loud wind is laid.

“Narrow is thy dwelling now; dark the place of thine abode. With three steps I compass thy grave, O thou who wast so great before! Four stones, with their heads of moss, are the only memorial of thee. A tree with scarce a leaf, long grass which whistles in the wind, mark to the hunter’s eye the grave of the mighty Morar. Morar! thou art low indeed. Thou hast no mother to mourn thee; no maid with her tears of love. Dead is she that brought thee forth. Fallen is the daughter of Morglan,

“Who on his staff is this? who is this, whose head is white with age, whose eyes are red with tears, who quakes at every step.—It is thy father, O Morar! the father of no son but thee. He heard of thy fame in battle; he heard of foes dispersed. He heard of Morar’s fame; why did he not hear of his wound? Weep, thou father of Morar! weep; but thy son heareth thee not. Deep is the sleep of the dead; low their pillow of dust. No more shall he hear thy voice; no more shall he awake at thy call. When shall it be morn in the grave, to bid the slumberer awake?

“Farewell, thou bravest of men! thou conqueror in the field! but the field shall see thee no more; nor the dark wood be lightened with the splendor of thy steel. Thou hast left no son. But the song shall preserve thy name. Future times shall hear of thee; they shall hear of the fallen Morar.

“The grief of all arose, but most the bursting sigh of Armin. He remembers the death of his
H son,

son, who fell in the days of his youth. Carmor was near the heroe, the chief of the echoing Galmal. Why bursts the sigh of Armin, he said? Is there a cause to mourn? The song comes with its music, to melt and please the soul. It is like soft mist, that, rising from a lake, pours on the silent vale; the green flowers are filled with dew, but the sun returns in his strength, and the mist is gone. Why art thou sad, O Armin, chief of sea-surrounded Gorma?

"Sad! I am indeed: nor small my cause of woe! —Carmor, thou hast lost no son; thou hast lost no daughter of beauty. Colgar the valiant lives, and Annira, fairest maid. The boughs of thy family flourish, O Carmor! but Armin is the last of his race. Dark is thy bed, O Daura! and deep thy sleep in the tomb.—When shalt thou awake with thy songs? with all thy voice of music?

"Rise winds of autumn, rise; blow upon the dark heath! streams of the mountains, roar! howl, ye tempest, in the top of the oak! walk through broken clouds, O moon! show by intervals thy pale face! bring to my mind that sad night, when all my children fell; when Arindal the mighty fell; when Daura the lovely failed.

Daura, my daughter! thou wert fair; fair as the moon on the hills of Fura; white as the driven snow; sweet as the breathing gale. Arindal, thy bow was strong, thy spear was swift in the field: thy look was like mist on the wave; thy shield, a red cloud in a storm. Armar, renowned in war, came, and fought Daurar's love; he was not long denied; fair was the hope of their friends.

"Erath,

“Erath, son of Odgal, repined ; for his brother was slain by Armar. He came disguised like a son of the sea : fair was his skiff on the wave ; white his locks of age ; calm his serious brow. Fairest of women, he said, lovely daughter of Armin ! a rock not distant in the sea, bears a tree on its side ; red shines the fruit afar. There Armar waits for Daura. I came to carry his love along the rolling sea.

“She went ; and she called on Armar. Nought answered, but the son of the rock. Armar, my love ! my love ! why tormentest thou me with fear ? hear, son of Ardnart, hear : it is Daura who calleth thee ! Erath the traitor fled laughing to the land. She lifted up her voice, and cried for her brother and her father. Arindal ! Armin ! none to relieve your Daura.

“Her voice came over the sea. Arindal my son descended from the hill ; rough in the spoils of the chase. His arrows rattled by his side ; his bow was in his hand : five dark gray dogs attended his steps. He saw fierce Erath on the shore : he seized and bound him to an oak. Thick bend the thongs of the hide around his limbs ; he loads the wind with his groans.

“Arindal ascends the wave in his boat, to bring Daura to land. Armar came in his wrath, and let fly the gray-feathered shaft. It sung ; it sunk in thy heart, O Arindal my son ! for Erath the traitor thou diedst. The oar is stopped at once ; he panted on the rock and expired. What is thy grief, O Daura, when round thy feet is poured thy brother's blood.

“The boat is broken in twain by the waves. Armar plunges into the sea, to rescue his Daura,

or die. Sudden a blast from the hill comes over the waves. He sunk, and he rose no more.

“Alone, on the sea-beat rock, my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind; and the rain beat hard on the side of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak. It died away, like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief she expired. And left thee Armin alone: gone is my strength in the war, and fallen my pride among women.”

“When the storms of the mountain come; when the north lifts the waves on high; I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon I see the ghosts of my children. Half-viewless, they walk in mournful conference together.”

A flood of tears streamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave some relief to her oppressed heart. Werter stopped, threw down the paper, seized her hand, and wept bitterly. Charlotte leaned on the other arm, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both in the greatest agitation. In this story, they saw all their own misfortunes, mutually felt them—and their tears flowed from the same source. The eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and wished to go from him; but sorrow and soft compassion pressed her down. She sighed to recover herself, and sobbing, desired him to proceed. Werter, with his heart almost bursting, took up the manuscript, and in broken accents

accents continued : " Why dost thou awake me, oh Gale ? It seems to say, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near ; and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come : he that saw me in my beauty shall come ; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me."

The unhappy Werter was quite overwhelmed by the power of these words. In the deepest despair, he flung himself at the feet of Charlotte, seized her hands, and pressed them to his eyes and forehead. A secret warning of his fatal intention first pierced her soul : her senses were bewildered ; she pressed his hands, pressed them to her bosom, and leaning towards him with a tender emotion, her glowing cheeks came in contact with his. They lost sight of every thing : the whole world was nothing to them. He threw his arm around her, pressed her to his bosom, and imprinted a thousand passionate kisses on her trembling lips. " Werter," cried she, with a faint voice, and turning her face from him, " Werter," and with a feeble hand she pushed him from her. At length, with a determined tone of voice, dictated by Prudence, she cried, " Werter !" He was awed, tore himself from her, and fell on his knees before her. She rose, and in a voice of love, blended with anger, she said, " Werter, this is the last time ; you will see me no more ;" and, casting a look full of tenderness on her unhappy lover, ran in to her own apartment, and locked the door after her. Werter stretched his arm after her, but could not detain her. He lay on the floor, with his head upon the sofa, and remained in this posture for near an hour, when he

was alarmed by a noise, which was the maid coming in to lay the cloth. He walked up and down the room; and as soon as he found himself alone, he went to the door of her apartment, and in a low voice called out, "Charlotte, only one word more, a last adieu." She was silent—he staid—he intreated—in vain. At last he cried, "Farewell, Charlotte; Farewell for ever." Werter came to the gate of the town. The guards knew him, and let him pass. The night was dark and gloomy—it rained and blew—he came back about eleven. When he got home, the servant observed that his master was without a hat, but durst not say any thing; and when he undressed him, found all his things were wet. The hat was found the next day on the top of a rock, which overlooked the valley, where it is inconceivable how he could climb in such a night without tumbling from the precipice, and being dashed to pieces. He went to bed, and lay till the morning. His servant found him writing when he rang for his coffee. He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter:

"For the last time I now open my eyes. Alas! they will never more behold the light of the sun; a thick and gloomy fog conceals it—yes, Nature mourn—thy child, thy friend, thy lover, draws near his end. This sentiment stands alone in my mind, and yet it appears like a dream, when I say, "This is the last morning." The last, Charlotte, I have no idea that correspond with the word last. To day I stand in all vigor. To-morrow, I shall lye cold and stiff upon the ground! To die! what is it! we only dream when we speak of it. I have seen many die; but such are the narrow

narrow limits of our intellectual powers, we have no conception of our own beginning and end. At this moment I possess myself; or rather, dearest of women I am thine. The next detached—separated—perhaps for ever. No, Charlotte, no; we now have an existence; how can we be annihilated? Annihilation! 'Tis a word that conveys no idea to my mind. Dead, Charlotte, confined in a pit, so dark, so narrow—I had a friend, who was every thing to me in my helpless youth—she died—I followed her hearse, and stood near her grave. I heard the brushing of the ropes which let down her coffin—the spades take up the mould, which, by degrees, covered it entirely from my sight. I prostrated myself on the earth—my heart was rent, smitten, and distracted. But I was ignorant of what had befallen me, or what would befall me—Death—Grave—I know not the meaning of these words.

“ Oh forgive, forgive me—Yesterday ought to have been the last moment of my life—Oh, my angel, for the first, the very first time did my soul taste the rapture to know that she loves me—yes, she loves me—My lips still glow with the holy warmth they imbibed from thine—New tides of joy roll in my heart—Forgive me—Oh, forgive me.

“ Oh, I knew that I was dear to you: the first glances—the first pressure of thy hand convinced me of this dire truth; but when I was absent from you; when I saw Albert at your side, my mind was again agitated with doubts and fears.

“ Do you remember the flowers you sent me, when in a disagreeable and crowded company, you could neither speak to me, nor give me your hand?

hand? Half the night have I knelt before them: I considered them as a pledge of thy affection; but the impression grew fainter, and, by degrees, was entirely effaced. As the flame which at first blazes with fury, gradually diminishes, and at last totally extinguishes itself—every thing is transitory—but a whole eternity cannot erase the memory of what I felt yesterday—She loves me—these arms have encircled her waist—these lips have trembled upon her's—Yes, Charlotte, you are eternally mine.

“Albert is your husband—What of it?—it is only for this world—and to rob him of you in this world, only were a crime—It is a crime—I have enjoyed it in all its extacy, and I punish myself for it. I have found a balsam which has revived my soul. From this moment you are mine, Charlotte! I go before—I go to my father—to your father; at the foot of whose throne will I pour forth my sorrows, and receive consolation till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you, embrace you, and continue with you for ever, in the presence of the Omnipotent. I neither dream nor rave—I see clear as I approach the grave—We shall meet each other again—I shall behold thy mother, and pour out my whole heart before her—thy mother—thy image.”

About eleven he enquired of his servant, whether Albert was returned. He told him he was, for he saw him pass by on horse-back; upon which, Werter gave him the following note unsealed, and ordered him to carry it to Albert:

“Be pleased to lend me your pistols for a journey. Adieu.”

The tender Charlotte had passed the night in great agitation. Her heart was torn by a
thousand

thousand different sensations. The ardor of Werter's passionate embraces had, in spite of all her efforts, made an impression on her breast. She reflected upon her days of innocence and tranquillity, which appeared to her doubly charming. She trembled at the idea of her husband's looks, and the pointed irony of his questions, when he might hear of Werter's visit. She found herself under the necessity of equivocating, a practice which she had not yet been guilty of, and considered with abhorrence. The repugnance, the distress she felt, made her fault appear the more enormous, and yet she could neither hate the author of it, nor resolve to see him no more. She was in tears till near morning, when she fell into a gentle sleep, from which she had scarce awoke, and dressed herself, when Albert returned. His presence was, for the first time, unwelcome to her. She trembled, lest her husband should discover that she had been crying, and this idea distressed her still more. She received him with an embrace which shewed more confusion than real satisfaction. Albert perceived it; and after opening a few packets and letters, asked her dryly, if nobody had been there. After some hesitation, she replied, "Werter spent an hour here yesterday." "He times his visits well," said Albert, and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The presence of a man she loved and honored, made an impression on her heart. She recollected all his goodness, generosity, and love: was angry that she had made him so ill a return. An involuntary impulse prompted her to follow him: she went into his room, took her work
alon;

along with her, and asked him if he wanted any thing. He replied no! and began to write—she sat down to work. In this irksome situation, they continued near an hour, Albert walking, sometimes up and down the room; Charlotte addressing some discourse to him, to which he did not deign to make any reply, but sat down again to write. This behavior gave her much distress, which was increased, by the endeavors she used to conceal it, and to stop the torrent of tears which was every moment ready to gush from her eyes. The arrival of Werter's servant compleated her misery. As soon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and said, "Give him the pistols—I wish him a good journey." These words were a thunderstroke to Charlotte. With a slow, feeble, tottering pace, she walked towards the wall, and with trembling hands took down the pistols. She hesitated, wiped the dust off them, and would have stopped longer, if a significant look from Albert had not prevented her. She gave the fatal arms to the servant, without being able to say a single word; and as soon as he left the house, she put up her work, and retired to her chamber, her mind laboring under distress better conceived than described. Her heart forboded all the dreadful calamities that would happen. Sometimes she resolved to go immediately, and throw herself at the feet of her husband; acquaint him with every circumstance of the preceding evening, and disclose to him her fault, and the apprehensions she was under; but then she foresaw it would be useless, for Albert could not be persuaded to go to Werter's house. Dinner was served, and a female

male visitor, whom Charlotte would not suffer to go, helped to support the conversation.

When Werter was told that Charlotte herself had delivered the pistols, he received them with transport. He ordered a crust of bread and some wine to be brought to him, sent the servant to dinner, and sat down to write :

To CHARLOTTE in Continuation.

“ They have passed through your hands.— You have wiped the dust from them. I kiss them a thousand times—you have touched them. Heaven approves of my design—and you, Charlotte, furnish me with the instruments. I ever wished to receive my death from your hands, and from your hands I shall receive it. My servant tells me, you trembled when you gave him the pistols, and did not bid me one farewell! Oh! wretch that I am!—not one farewell! In that hour which unites me to you for ever, can you shut your heart against me. Oh, Charlotte, ages cannot obliterate the impression; and it is impossible you should hate the man, who thus passionately loves you.”

After dinner, he told his servant to pack up every thing, tore a great number of papers, and went out to settle some trifling debts. He returned home, and then went out again, notwithstanding the rain, first to the Count's, garden, and then farther into the country. At night he returned, and sat down to write.

“ My friend, I have beheld the mountains, the woods, and the sky for the last time. Farewell! Pardon me, my dearest mother! Console her griefs, my friend—my affairs are all arranged—
Farewell,

Farewell, we shall see one another again, and be happy.

"I have ill requited you, Albert, and you forgive me. I have disturbed the tranquillity of your family, and excited suspicion between you. Farewell, I am going to put an end to it all. Oh may my death remove every impediment to your felicity. Albert! Albert, make that angel happy, and the benediction of the Most High be upon you."

He was much occupied among his papers during the whole evening: tore and burnt a great many; others he sealed up and directed to his friend. They contained loose thoughts and maxims, several of which I have seen. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him; then dismissed his servant, who, with the rest of the family, lay in a distant part of the house. The servant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be ready at a moment's warning, his master having told him that the horses would be at the door before six o'clock.

TO CHARLOTTE in Continuation.

Past Eleven o'Clock.

"All around me breathes nothing but silence, and my soul is serene. Gracious GOD, I thank thee for endowing me, in this awful moment, with warmth and vigor. I approach the window, and through the clouds, which are driven rapidly along
by

by impetuous winds, I perceive a few stars. Celestial bodies you shall not fall. The eternal supports both you and me. I beheld the great bear, my favorite of all the constellations : for when I quitted you of an evening, it used to shine opposite to your door. With what rapture have I contemplated it : often with up-lifted hands have I made it a witness of my happiness. Oh ! Charlotte, what is it that does not recall thee to my recollection. Dost thou not surround me on all sides, and have I not, with a childish fondness, collected every thing which was thine ? Thy dear profile I bequeath thee again, Charlotte. I pray you have a tender regard for it. A thousand kisses have I imprinted on it, and a thousand times have I saluted it, as I went out and came in. I have written a note to your father, desiring him to protect my remains. In the church-yard, adjacent to the fields, there are two lime trees : it is there I wish to be deposited. He has it in his power, and will do this for his friend—Add your intreaties to mine. I suppose pious Christians will not chuse their bones to be interred near those of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah ! let me then be laid in some remote valley, or in the highway, that the priest and the Levite may, on passing that way, lift up their eyes, and return thanks to the Lord, while the Samaritan drops a tear to my memory.

“ Charlotte, I can, without shuddering, hold the fatal instrument of my death. You deliver it to me, and I recoil not. All ! all is done. All the wishes of my heart are fulfilled.

“ Why was the satisfaction denied me of dying for you, Charlotte ; of sacrificing myself to you.

you. Could I restore peace and tranquillity to your bosom, with what rapture would I meet my doom. But to a chosen few only is given the privilege of shedding their blood for those who are dear to them, and thus augmenting their happiness.

“ I should wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear. You have touched them. They are sacred. I have made this request to your father—My soul hovers over the grave. My pockets must not be searched. The pink ribband which you wore on your breast the first time I saw you, surrounded by your children; (Oh kiss them a thousand times, and tell them the unhappy fate of their friend, they will weep for me. Oh, at that moment, how powerfully was I attracted to you—how unable ever since to emancipate myself from you). This ribband must be buried with me. You made me a present of it on my birth-day. How all these circumstances affected me. Little did I reflect on the consequences. Be at peace; let me intreat you be at peace—They are loaded—the clock strikes twelve—I go—Farewell, Charlotte, Farewell.”

A neighbour saw the flash, and heard the report; but as every thing remained quiet, he took no farther notice.

At six o'clock the servant went into his room, and found his master stretched on the floor, weltering in his blood. He took him in his arms, and spoke to him, but received no reply. He first went to a surgeon, then ran to Albert's. When
Charlotte

Charlotte heard the bell ring, she shuddered with horror, she waked her husband, and both got up. The servant all in tears imparts the dreadful tidings. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet. When the surgeon came to Werter, he was still on the floor: his pulse continued to beat: but having shot himself through the right eye, the ball had pierced his brain. However, a vein was opened, and he still breathed.

From the blood round his chair, it was imagined, that he perpetrated this rash deed as he sat at his bureau, and that he afterwards fell on the floor. He lay near the window. He was dressed in a blue coat and buff waistcoat, and had boots on. Every body in the house, the neighbourhood, and people from all parts of the town, flocked to see him. Albert came in, Werter was laid upon the bed; his head was bound up, and his face wore the paleness of death. His limbs were motionless: there was yet some signs of life; but every moment he was expected to expire. He had drank only one glass of wine, Emilia Galotti was lying open on his desk. Nothing shall be said of Albert's distress, nor of the situation of Charlotte.

As soon as the old steward heard of the dreadful event, he hurried to the house, embraced his dying friend, and wept bitterly. His eldest boys soon followed him—they fell on their knees at the side of Werter's bed, in the deepest anguish—kissed his hands and mouth. The eldest, who had ever been his favorite, hung on his lips till he breathed his last, and was with difficulty taken away.

At

160 WERTER AND CHARLOTTE:

At twelve o'clock Werter died. The steward, by his presence and precautions, prevented any disturbance among the populace. At eleven o'clock at night Werter was buried in the spot he himself had chosen. The steward and his sons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no priest attended the funeral.

'Twas dead of night ;—the pale moon's transient beam
Cast sudden o'er the land a sickly gleam :
The thunder's stroke the tow'ring rock had torn :—
Swift by the winds the broken clouds were borne ;
From the dread steep, where long it proudly stood,
The tottering ruin rush'd into the flood !
Down came the torrent, swell'd with bursting rains,
O'erspreading there the wide and dreary plains ;
But here pent in strait course it pour'd along,
And, whirling, the dark caverns all among,
With fearful sounds disturb the trembling air,
And dreadful, pleas'd thy poison'd ear—DESPAIR !

Full on the rock, while splitting where he stood,
Envyng the roarings of the troubled flood ;
The daring WERTER curs'd his cruel fate,
That love forlorn, gave tenfold pain of hate !

But, oh ! the raging sorrows of thy breast,
Though by the tempest's bellowing voice express'd,
Would yet, all unasswag'd and boiling there,
Burst with thy soul on the unfeeling air.

WERTER

WERTER to CHARLOTTE,

Supposed to be written by HIM a few hours before
his Death.

FAREWELL, dear Charlotte!—take this last adieu,
Life, and the world, now Werter yields to you,
To quit this earthly scene he hastes away,
With each affliction of each rising day.
To happier Albert, all your charms resign,
Which rigid fate, has hinder'd to be mine:
Those charms, alas! beheld by me too late,
From whence alone I all my sorrows date.
Such heart-felt sorrows those can only prove,
Who feel the miseries of hopeless love;
That love! which now excites my rash offence
With all the parting pangs of going hence.
Whate'er in future I am doom'd to bear!
No torture can exceed my torture hear.
Condemn'd to know thee in another's arms,
With all thy tenderness, and all thy charms.
What punishment can future fate bestow,
Compar'd to what I've felt, to what I know?
Could reason furnish one short glimm'ring ray,
To cheer the prospect on some distant day,
That possibly in time thou might'st be mine,
This anxious being I would not resign;

But

162 WERTER AND CHARLOTTE:

But drag of life, the ling'ring galling chain,
 In secret weep, and inwardly complain.
 But all is dark! no kindly stars appear,
 My dreary steps to guide, my path to cheer;
 But fearful phantoms my scar'd mind affrights,
 Joyless my day, and terrible each night.
 Fantastic spectres haunt my bed around,
 And black despair, with all her horrors crown'd,
 Not so with those who're happy in their loves,
 Whom mutual passion crown, and fate approves,
 Where ev'ry wish, no crime can e'er molest,
 But each is with sweet confidence oppress'd;
 Fearless that jealous husband interpose,
 To blast their joys, and change them into woes.
 But bless'd and blessing, fill'd with ev'ry joy,
 Partake the purest bliss without alloy.

For such does fortune, all her gifts prepare,
 To crown the happy youth, and smiling fair;
 The landkip brightens, and each flow'ry grove,
 Blooms with the charming scenes for gentle love.
 The birds in concert tune the am'rous lay,
 The turtles bill, the lambkins sport and play,
 The pride of spring, and ev'ry sweet disclose,
 And the soft stream of pleasure round them flows.

Such my sad fate, which cuts my thread of life,
 Doom'd by despair to love another's wife;
 Wife of my friend, which makes it more severe,
 For still my friendship, Charlotte, is sincere.

Forgive me this deceit, my charming fair,
 Urg'd by thy Werter, in supreme despair.

No common journey Werter has to take,
 But one more sure is that he means to make.
 No trifling sum has he to be purloin'd;
 For who can steal the sorrows of the mind?
 To the bright regions of the world above,
 I speed to taste in bliss seraphic love.
 Yet faint the joys my fancy pictures there,
 Whilst thou on earth art fairest of the fair,
 To me Elyzium will a desert prove,
 'Till with thy presence blest'd, and with thy love.
 The fatal instrument I now command,
 Receiv'd, alas! from thy unknowing hand.
 Adieu, my Charlotte, heaven thy peace restore,
 When thy unhappy Werter is no more.

SUCH

SUCH were the effects of the infatuation of Werter's mind. The perturbation of his spirits hurried him at last beyond the confines of this world, and he rushed into the invisible one before his call. It is very remarkable that love, when carried to excess, produces effects similar to those acted by its opposite passion, hatred, the most implacable consequence of which can only terminate in the death of its object. The story of the ill fated Hackman is too recent in every one's memory to be here mentioned as an instance; and the domestic occurrences of every year, produce sufficient examples of the above observation. But Werter's distress was singular; he rushed not out of existence with the hopes of annihilation; on the contrary, the prospect of a future state constantly occupied his mind. As his former life had been spent in innocence, the prospect could have no horrors for him. It seldom happens, but amidst the most severe calamities concomitant with our imperfect state, we feel some circumstance, or secret power, alleviate our misery, or support us in the evils of life. To this we cannot suppose poor Werter insensible; for he who could feel the comfortable sensation which always accompanies the involuntary tear, on its swimming in the eye, after having privately alleviated the distresses of a miserable fellow-creature, could never complain of the want of resources. He who could never walk abroad on a fine day or clear night, without often finding an inexhaustible fund of objects for contemplation and admiration in the surrounding beauties of nature, and believed, and could reason so well on a future life, and the certainty of happiness hereafter, must
be

be actuated with a phrenzy as desperate and senseless as that which agitates the unfortunate maniac confined by chains in darkness; and who, if he had the liberty of his limbs, would make the same melancholy exit. The human mind is inexplicable—when agitated, it is like a tempestuous sea, and reason like a small vessel unable to weather the storm, sinks in the tumultuous conflict. Yet, shall the guilt of their deaths be upon their heads, when perpetrated by their hands? Charity wishes the contrary. However, we ought fervently to intreat for strength to run the race set before us, and resignation, to wait with patience for a release from our troubles, relying with implicit confidence in the attributes of our guardian, father, and friend.

Of those who put a period to their existence, many are urged to the desperate measure, by some sudden and dreadful misfortune, or the enjoyments of the world are grown too insipid for them to relish any more, and they cannot form a taste for higher gratifications. The mind of man being formed for the pursuit of happiness, when the view of this is lost, it leaves a void—a dreadful void—and of this void Werter complains: and although accomplished above the generality of mankind, the unutterable sensation of hopeless love, left no room in his heart for the mental pleasures which can alone constitute happiness. It was the misfortune of the celebrated Petrarch to pine after an object placed beyond the reach of his situation; the beautiful Laura, whom he so sweetly sings in his sonnets, like Charlotte, was settled in the connubial state. In the solitary retirement of Vaucluse, the poet saw and admired his

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his love; and for ten years after her death, still
saw the pleasures of retirement, and the beauty
of the fair Laura. His passion was not so out-
rageous as Werter's, and he poured it out in a man-
ner that will immortalize them both, and make
them the admiration of every succeeding genera-
tion.

AH! from the Muse that bosom wild,
By treach'rous magic was beguil'd,
To strike the deathful blow:
She fill'd his soft ingenuous mind
With many a feeling too refin'd,
And rous'd to livelier pangs his wakeful sense of woe;

Then with not o'er his earthly tomb
The baleful night-shades lucid bloom,
To drop its deadly dew.
Nor oh forbid the twisted thorn,
That rudely binds his turf forlorn,
With Spring's green swelling buds to vegetate anew,
What tho' refus'd each chanted rite,
Here viewless mourners shall delight
To touch the shadowy shell;
And Petrarch's harp that wept the doom
Of Laura, lost in early bloom,
In melancholy tone, shall ring his pensive knell.

Dr. WHARTON,

We

We see, through the course of these letters, the rise, progress, and effects, of the most accumulated distress which can ever attend a heart susceptible of the softer passion. Many, who have never felt the tremulous emotions, the tender ebullitions of the heart, when this involuntary sensation has taken possession of their souls, have declaimed with more energy than sense against the author of this little work, as encouraging suicide; but to such beings, as belonging to another order, I offer no answer. Suicide is certainly indefensible; and he who would attempt to apologize for a crime which cuts off the opportunity of repentance, must be worse than insane. Few, I believe, read this tale, but are affected by the perusal: the style is energetic and animated: it addresses itself to the heart; and as we all experience the unfortunate vicissitudes of life, we cannot help taking an interest in the distress of poor Werter; but are we not equally affected by the recital, or exhibition of a tragedy? And shall that incite desponding ideas, and incline us to take fatal steps, and proceed to the impious practice of self-destruction? If we read this book with attention, we shall find Werter had too much pride, notwithstanding his concessions to humanity: his distresses were fastidious and extravagant, urged by caprice and passion, which he never took pains to suppress. Hence his erroneous sentiments, and real inclinations, were slightly varnished over by superficial and fanciful perfections, indulging, without restraint, an impetuous and criminal attachment, from which he reasons on fanciful and absurd grounds, consuming the active season of life in listless indolence, holding up an execrable example

ple to the fair married part of the creation, inspiring them with the idea of enjoying an enamorado besides their husband. If Werter often appears on the brink of the fatal precipice: if his weakness verges on a crime: if he dignifies his rashness by the appellation of sentiment, delicacy, and tenderness, and sacrilegiously talks of entering with a pure heart into the presence of his Creator, while deliberately arraigning his dispensations, and contemning his power, by resolving to terminate his own existence, and rush, uncalled for, to his awful tribunal, are we to imitate his example, and do the deed of death?

Forbear, forbear, the partial praise,
Nor thus for guilt in specious lays,
The wreath of glory twine:
In vain with hues of gorgeous glow,
Gay fancy gives her vest to flow,
Unless Truth's matron hand the floating folds confine,

Just Heav'n man's fortitude to prove,
Permits, thro' life, at large to rove,
The tribes of hell-born woe.
Yet the same pow'r that wisely sends
Life's fiercest ills, indulgent lends,
Religion's golden shield to break th' embattled foe,

Vain man, 'tis Heav'n's prerogative
To take what first it deign'd to give,
Thy tributary breath;

In awful expectation plac'd,
 Await thy doom, nor impious haste,
 To pluck from GOD's right hand his instruments of
 death,

Dr. WHARTON.

If our misfortunes have been ever so great, our distress ever so lamentable, our misery ever so poignant, still we know those sufferings must soon be at an end : let but a few short years pass over, perhaps but a few days, and the grave must relieve us from all our trouble. How shall we, with wisdom, exchange the temporal evils of a few precarious years, for the dreadful punishment which must be experienced for myriads of ages ? If the stings of conscience are too keen for our guilty hearts, let us not whet their points, already too sharp, by hurling defiance at the Author of life, by which we cut off every opportunity of atonement. The very possibility of a life beyond the grave, should be sufficient to restrain our hands ; then how much more ought we to be awed from the shocking self-destruction of our being, by the certainty of a future retribution !

Among Werter's papers were found, several Poems, which were strongly tinged with the marks of the unhappy passion that hastened his dissolution. The following is a translation of one of the most finished of these. It will serve to exhibit the state of his mind in one of those intervals, when reason assumed the sway over love and madness.

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OF all the passions of the breast,
The tyrant love stands first confess;
With all his varied woes,
Hope, joy, and grief,
Fear, jealousy and rage,
The lover does engage,
And sad despair admitting no relief.

This Werter felt, whose anxious mind,
To one dear object was confin'd,
Sad source of all his pain;
He felt them all assail,
And in the silent shade,
For hapless lovers made,
He found above the rest despair prevail.

Affliction's varied tearful store,
He oft experienc'd o'er and o'er,
And call'd in Reason's aid,
Some moments to prolong.
But ah! in vain he fought,
Reason no comfort brought,
And death he met among the whirling throng.

Yet how to court this awful shade,
So frightful by the fearful made,
Was constant in his mind;
Reflection flew away,
And moody madness cried,
"Thy hand may be supplied,
With what will close the horrors of the day."

Then

Then nought to him the phantom fear,
 Made death so dreadfully appear,
 To cowards only known,
 But not unto the brave,
 They meet it face to face,
 Nor think it a disgrace,
 To bury all their sorrows in the grave.

“What need have I to be at strife,

“With the tumultuous ill of life?”

He cried, and often sigh’d,

“What racks a lover’s mind,

“When in his own defence,

“With forms he might dispense,

“And at one stroke leave all his cares behind.”

What is Religion but a mode,
 Which those who’re truly brave explode;
 Contriv’d to curb the will,
 And heart-felt sorrow bear;
 Next mild Religion’s hand,
 Ah! who can have command?
 But your own self to banish ev’ry care.

“Diseases fell, and galling chains,

“The callous catalogue of pains;

“Long time may be indur’d,

“And smiling hope remain,

“But tortures and despair,

“What wretched man would bear,

“Who in oblivion could drown all his pain?

“For

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“ For fancied ills did heroes bleed !
“ But mine beyond theirs do exceed,
“ And baffle ev’ry balm
“ That ever yet was known ;
“ Ten thousand deaths I die—
“ Lament, despair and sigh,
“ When one would all my sorrows end alone.”

“ Ye beck’ning shades I come,
“ Prepare to fill the silent tomb,
“ Where Werter’s head may rest,
“ And love torment no more.
“ There Charlotte will appear,
“ And drop the silent tear,
“ When my sad waking dream of life is o’er.”

THE END.

Benny Hingsman



